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# Canada's Urban Strategy

## A Vision for the 21st Century



**Prime Minister's  
Caucus Task Force  
on Urban Issues**

**Chair: Judy Sgro, MP**

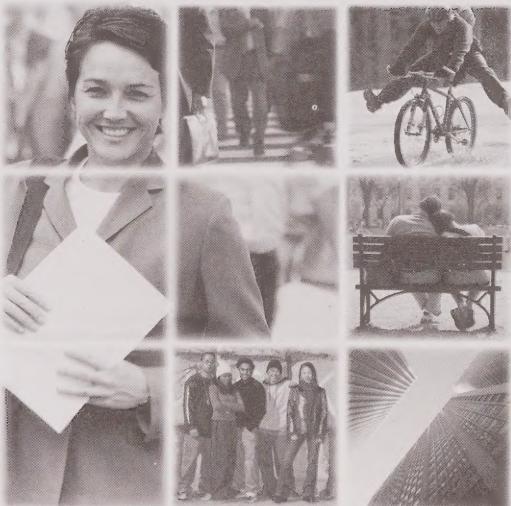
*Interim Report  
April 2002*

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# *Canada's* **Urban Strategy**

## A Vision for the 21st Century

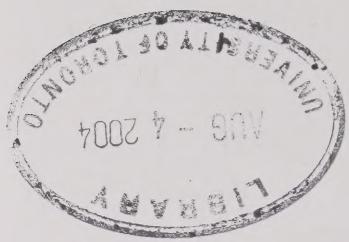


**Prime Minister's  
Caucus Task Force  
on Urban Issues**

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**Chair: Judy Sgro, MP**

*Interim Report  
April 2002*



April 30, 2002

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, P.C. M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

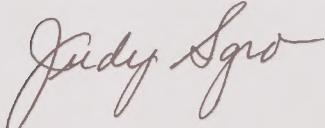
Dear Prime Minister:

We are pleased to present the Interim Report of the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, which was directed in May, 2001 to engage in a dialogue with fellow Canadians and to examine the challenges and opportunities facing our urban regions.

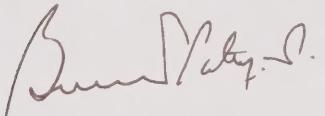
In our view, this Interim Report provides an accurate picture of urban Canada in the 21st Century – its pressures and its problems.

On behalf of the members of the Task Force, we would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to hear the views of Canadians on this important issue. We look forward to continuing the dialogue through the next phase of our mandate when we will present a final report on the responses arising from the ideas and recommendations expressed in this report.

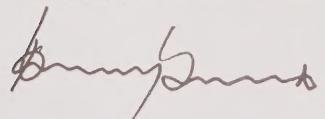
Sincerely,



Judy Sgro, Member of Parliament, York West  
Chair, Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues



Dr. Bernard Patry, Member of Parliament, Pierrefonds-Dollard  
Vice-Chair, Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues



The Honourable Tommy Banks, Senator (Alberta)  
Vice-Chair, Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues

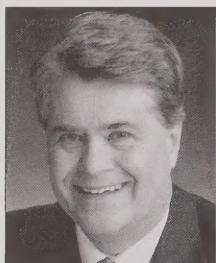
## Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues



Judy Sgro, M.P.  
York West/Ouest  
Chair



The Honourable  
Tommy Banks  
Senator (Alberta)  
Vice Chair



Dr. Bernard Patry, M.P.  
Pierrefonds-Dollard  
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Reg Alcock, M.P.  
Winnipeg South/Sud



Carole-Marie Allard, M.P.  
Laval Est/East



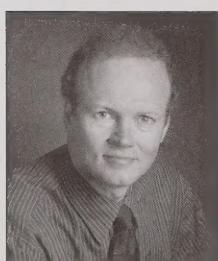
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York South-Weston/  
York Sud-Weston



Bryon Wilfert, M.P.  
Oak Ridges

# Special Thanks from the Chair

**O**n behalf of the members of the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, I would like to thank the participants who attended the regional roundtables, the witnesses who appeared before us, and the many Canadians who wrote, called or e-mailed their comments. Your ideas helped to shape this report.

My thanks to my colleagues on the Task Force who participated in these important consultations. Your commitment, despite busy travel schedules and heavy agendas, is much appreciated. Without your support and dedication, this phase of the work of the Task Force would have not been so positive or so successful.

I would also like to acknowledge members of the National Liberal Caucus who offered their valuable and helpful insights and those who joined the Task Force at regional roundtables. I want to also recognize the assistance of the National Liberal Caucus Research Bureau, Senate Liberal Resource Centre, Statistics Canada, and the Library of

Parliament. Special mention must be made of the staff from the offices of the members of the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues who helped organize regional roundtables, provided administrative support, and assisted their members throughout this challenging exercise.

My thanks to the generosity of York University Communications Department who created the graphics and designed this report.

I especially would like to thank my staff who worked so diligently arranging numerous meetings and spent many hours organizing and writing this report: Ihor Wons (EA, Judy Sgro, MP), Patricia Pepper (AA, Judy Sgro, MP), Lorne Randa (National Liberal Caucus Research Bureau), Lindsey Richardson (Parliamentary Intern) and Jena Cameron (formerly with the National Liberal Caucus Research Bureau). I would also like to recognize the contribution of Emily Marangoni, Rossanna Pena, Judy Borges and Jenny Hooper.

Without them all, this report would not have been possible.



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# Executive Summary

*The Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues presents its interim report recommending a plan of action to develop Canada's Urban Strategy. This Urban Strategy will assist the Government of Canada to work more collaboratively with all our partners to enhance the quality of life and strengthen the economic competitiveness of our urban centres in the 21st Century.*

**O**n May 9th, 2001, the Prime Minister announced the creation of the Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues. The recommendations and ideas in this interim report emerged from the consultations arising from our mandate.

We were directed to consider certain issues such as:

- Key opportunities for increasing economic competitiveness in our cities;
- Environmental issues such as air, water quality, and land use;
- Approaches to strengthening cultural assets;
- Urban transit;
- Effective approaches to settlement and integration services for newcomers to Canada, bearing in mind existing agreements with provinces;
- The specific needs and circumstances of at risk populations such as urban Aboriginal people, recent immigrants, persons with disabilities and the homeless; and
- Crime-related issues facing large urban centres including substance abuse and sustainable prevention responses.

Members of the Task Force visited eight urban regions – Halifax, Montreal, The National Capital Region, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. The Task Force met with provincial ministers

and officials, civic politicians and administrators, community leaders, business people, presidents of local and national organizations, experts in the field and volunteer groups. In all, the Task Force members met with more than 700 participants. In addition, the Task Force met weekly in Ottawa to consult with Cabinet Ministers and departmental staff.

Our consultations painted a picture of urban Canada that revealed a proud nation struggling with significant growth and an ageing infrastructure. Ever-increasing demands for services and programs are becoming progressively more difficult for municipal governments to manage on their limited property tax base. As the economic engines of the country, it is critical that our urban regions sustain their levels of growth and continue to contribute to Canada's high quality of life.

Canada's Urban Strategy would provide a strategic framework for a collective approach, with the Government of Canada acting as the catalyst within a strengthened urban partnership. It offers an opportunity to establish a foundation for sustainable growth for a strong and healthy nation in collaboration with provincial, municipal and community partners. Given that the Government of Canada has a significant investment

in urban regions, Canada's Urban Strategy could facilitate fundamental changes to our current methods of program planning.

Canada's Urban Strategy should provide the Government of Canada with an opportunity to actively and directly participate in community building through strategic policies and programs. The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada develop appropriate strategies to ensure that resources and programs are strategically invested, accurately reflect the needs and maximize all available opportunities in our urban centres.

Canada's Urban Strategy would encourage all orders of government to coordinate resources, and consult and collaborate on a new approach to the challenges in Canada's urban regions.

Within this framework, we have shown that there needs to be opportunities to develop a housing and

transportation program, as well as a long-term infrastructure program.

The Task Force believes that it has presented a plan for action that reflects the 21st century. A Strategy that addresses the economic, social, environmental and cultural challenges but at the same time provides a unique opportunity for the Government of Canada to ensure our urban regions are in a strong position to lead the future health and wealth of our nation.

This interim report is by no means the end of the debate. Rather, it concludes the first phase of the mandate and is meant to be the focus of further dialogue which will be completed with the release of a final report later this year. We hope that the ideas and recommendations presented here will stimulate much debate and discussion among our colleagues and Canadians in every region.

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# A New Approach

*In our urban vision for Canada, we see innovative urban regions competing successfully on a global scale, ensuring the highest quality of life for our citizens, promoting sustainable economic growth, and attaining social peace across all communities. Canada's urban centres play a vital and leading role in the nation's economic, environmental, social and cultural development, and must be internationally recognized as centres of excellence.*

The Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues

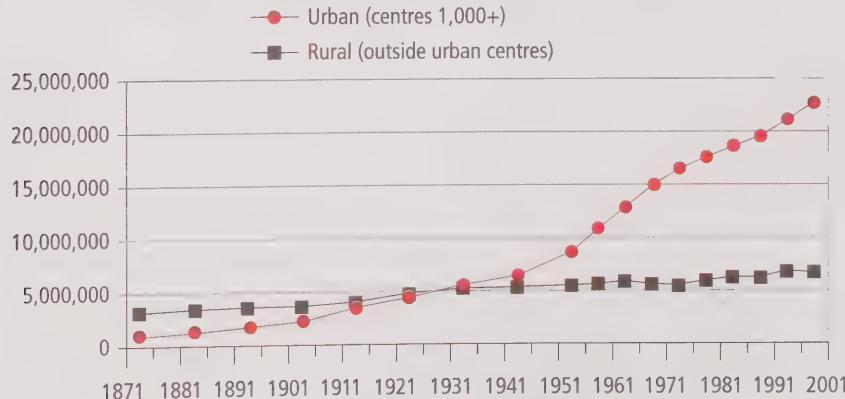
## Why Canada Needs an Urban Strategy

**The Urban Millennium:** United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has declared that the world has entered the "urban millennium." An unprecedented rate of urbanization is occurring throughout the world. Three billion people – nearly half the people on earth – live and work in cities. By 2030, over 60% of the world's population will live in cities. The United Nations predicts there will be 26 mega-cities with populations in excess of ten million by the year 2015.

**Demographic Demand:** The 2001 Census confirms that 80% of people in Canada live in urban centres – a 5.2% increase since the 1996 Census. Most of this growth – 51% – is concentrated in four major urban regions: Toronto/Golden Horseshoe; Montreal and environs; Vancouver/Lower Mainland; and the Calgary-Edmonton corridor. As well, there are over thirty urban regions in Canada with a population of 100,000 or more.

**Urban Economy:** Canada more than ever is driven by the urban economy, with the urban regions contributing much of the wealth of the nation:

**Figure 1: Urbanization in Canada – 1871 to 1996**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1871-1996

- **Halifax** accounts for 47% of Nova Scotia's GDP;
- **Montreal Urban Community** accounts for 49% of Quebec's GDP;
- **Greater Toronto Area** accounts for 44% of Ontario's GDP;
- **Winnipeg** accounts for 67% of Manitoba's GDP;
- **Calgary and Edmonton** combined account for 64% of Alberta's GDP; and
- **Vancouver** accounts for 53% of British Columbia's GDP  
*[Metropolitan Outlook.] Conference Board of Canada, Spring 2001]*.

**Innovation:** The Government of Canada's 2002 Innovation Strategy acknowledges that its success depends on geographic clusters. In a knowledge-based economy, the sources of competitive advantage tend to be localized. If we are to accelerate the pace of innovation, we must improve the quality of life in our urban regions. Our research institutions and higher education facilities are primarily located in our urban areas.

**Cities in Crisis:** There is mounting evidence that our cities are ailing due to deteriorating infrastructure, declining air and water quality, traffic gridlock, homelessness, growing income polarization and marginalization, and budget crises. With few ways to generate revenue other than through property taxes, urban regions are finding it increasingly difficult to provide basic services and make repairs to infrastructure.

**Future Prosperity:** Experts agree on the growing importance of cities as the key to Canada's future pros-

perity. It is now more important than ever for national governments to inspire and provide opportunities for balanced social and economic growth in urban regions.

- **Globalization:** Canada's ability to compete successfully in world markets depends largely on the vitality of our urban regions.
- **International Obligations:** Canada is a signatory to approximately 2,000 international agreements and treaties. We have an obligation to meet or exceed the goals in those agreements, and Canada's urban regions are a means of achieving those goals.

### Developing Canada's Urban Strategy

There is a need for coordination, collaboration, cohesiveness, effective representation and commitment to a new approach for Canada's urban regions. Canada's Urban Strategy suggests ways in which the Government of Canada can play a key role.

If we recognize that urban regions are the engines of economic and social growth, then we need to develop a mechanism to ensure their success and competitiveness in the 21st century. What instrument is best suited to developing and implementing a Strategy for Urban Canada that provides a framework for future policies and programs? The questions of appropriate mechanisms and the responsibility for establishing them will be the subject of discussion for the second phase of our mandate.

One suggestion is to work through an Urban Partnership, collaborating and consulting with all public and

private partners, and mobilizing all stakeholders to work together to fulfil the goals and objectives of Canada's Urban Strategy. The challenge will be to find a way to coordinate all of those areas in the best interests of the urban regions.

We need to apply an urban "lens" to all policies and programs, both national and international that are directed at urban regions. An urban perspective will guide future legislation and policies so that programs designed for urban centres can be assessed for both negative and positive impacts.

The Task Force recommends that an advisory body be established to include representatives from key national organizations, the academic community, and the business sector to provide on-going consultation and advice on urban policy to the Government of Canada.

We also recommend that the Government of Canada should foster research on national and international best practices, provide intelligence on trends and conditions in our urban regions, and communicate Government of Canada activities related to urban issues. By working together, we can plan new programs, policies, and projects to address top priority urban issues such as housing, infrastructure, and transit.

## **Four Pillars of Canada's Urban Strategy**

Canada's Urban Strategy should be based on the following four pillars:

- 1. Commitment to a New Approach for Urban Regions:** A new approach that includes stable

federal funding for urban infrastructure programs and funding for projects that clearly exceed the fiscal capabilities of municipal governments. Priority initiatives should include:

- A National Affordable Housing Program**
- A National Infrastructure Program**
- A National Transportation Program**

**2. Coordination & Cohesiveness:** The Government of Canada currently makes decisions and spends money in areas that have a significant impact on urban economies and quality of life. Cabinet-level coordination of current federal programs, projects, and spending can create synergy and more effectively focus the Government of Canada's activities. We must continue to ensure that Canadians receive the highest value from their tax dollars. To achieve this, the Government of Canada must consider issues of national significance in a coordinated manner, not only among departments but also in consultation with other orders of government.

**3. Collaboration & Consultation:** Create a mechanism for meaningful collaboration, within the Government of Canada's jurisdiction, with our public and private partners. The Government of Canada should also establish a mechanism to ensure that urban regions are consulted on amendments to existing legislation, and proposed new legislation as well as international agreements which may affect them.

*"I think we've noticed in many of our audits that there is too much stove-piping. It's how one deals with horizontal issues in government especially... I would hope that there could be a stronger focus given to the coordination role... I think it's a challenge that government will have to come to address as it goes forward."*

Sheila Fraser,  
Auditor General of Canada,  
Presentation to Standing  
Committee on Health,  
February 2002

#### 4. Capacity building & Communication:

**Communication:** Create capacity at the federal level to better understand urban trends and conditions across Canada and internationally. This information flow will help to guide federal decision-making. The Government of Canada should make efforts to develop better ways of communicating information regarding the types of investments and programs aimed at urban regions.

#### Measuring Effectiveness and Efficiency of Canada's Urban Strategy

The use of performance management and assessment measures is now standard practice both nationally and internationally. In Canada, a growing number of provincial and municipal governments use performance measures to track and assess service delivery efficiency and to provide accountability to stakeholders. At the federal level, since the amended Auditor General's Act of 1995, sustainable development considerations are built into the mandates of federal departments through the use of performance measures.

According to the 2002 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Report, *"Theory to Practice: Lessons Learned From the Use of Performance Assessment Measures to Implement Sustainable Communities,"* the use of performance measures alongside a properly designed performance-management program is "an invaluable tool to improve accountability, guide policy development and revision,

evaluate progress, identify capital and operational cost-savings, and promote understanding of the meaning of community sustainability and the need for positive change."

Designing and developing the most effective performance measures requires a combination of expert research and analysis in conjunction with extensive consultation with key stakeholders across the country. These stakeholders include all orders of government, the public service, private sector partners, community leaders, and the general public. Involving these stakeholders in the process enhances the commitment to the measures and targets, which is essential for implementing a successful performance-management program and obtaining results.

Specific criteria should be developed to review and measure the actions and investments incorporated into the Urban Strategy. A performance management program generally follows a process that should include the following basic core elements:

- **Define Vision:** Define long-term vision, goals, and objectives, taking into account the values of all stakeholders. This includes looking at, among other things, regional priorities as well as goals set by international agreements.

- **Determine Current Situation:** Examine the current situation and establish data to describe the present and historical conditions. Assess to what extent each current program does or does not meet

stakeholder values. Determine the gap between the current situation and the long-term goals.

- **Set Targets:** Set short and long-term targets within a realistic time frame.
- **Develop Action Plan:** Develop an action plan to achieve targets within the timeframes. The action plan will include developing new practices in order to deliver services more efficiently and effectively and meet the targeted improvements. This should include adopting best practices from around the world.
- **Measure Results:** Develop a tracking and reporting framework, along with a mechanism to analyze results at appropriate intervals. There should also be a mechanism for targets to be revised due to evolving challenges and opportunities.

- **Communicate Results:** Develop a method to effectively disseminate results, and to provide accountability to all stakeholders. It is also important to effectively communicate success stories and new best practices in order to provide examples for others to follow.

Measuring the performance of the investments made and actions taken under Canada's Urban Strategy allows the Government of Canada to continually target its investments; and ensure that resources are being used efficiently and effectively. Adopting a performance management program will ensure that the Urban Strategy is based on achieving results and will maintain credibility.

## **Canada's Urban Strategy for the 21st Century**

An Urban Strategy for Canada should provide an opportunity for the Government of Canada to play a strong role in achieving the goals of the nation while being accountable to all Canadians.

Some of the ideas brought forth by the Task Force are not new. In the 1970s, under the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, the Government of Canada looked at policies and programs from an urban perspective. A number of mechanisms were established within that Ministry to ensure urban issues were given due attention. These included a National Urban Council where all three government levels met and consulted on important issues, an Urban Research Unit that helped facilitate dialogue and disseminate best practices, and a spokesperson for the Government's urban objectives through a Ministry and Minister of State.

The purpose of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs was to develop appropriate means for the Government of Canada to influence the development of urban centres and to achieve national objectives related to urban Canada. The Task Force believes that these ideals and objectives are worth reviewing in light of the "new reality" in which urban regions are the engines of Canada's economy.

The growing challenges in Canadian cities are not easily resolved and have far reaching ramifications. The problems facing urban regions are ones that affect all Canadians- whether

*"Federal leadership is urgently needed to shape an urban agenda across the country. Policies, programs, regulations, standards and financing, all need to be driven by a coherent strategy if they are to be effective. It is incumbent upon the federal government to provide the framework for a competitive urban nation."*

Don Baxter  
The 2nd Annual Urban Summit  
November 2001

they are related to housing, transit, poverty, crime or pollution. Because of the range of issues and the diversity of conditions, we need a strategy that focuses on urban Canada – one that recognizes its tremendous resources,

its economic successes, its future potential as well as its challenges.

Therefore, the Task Force strongly recommends the Government of Canada develop an urban strategy for the 21st Century.<sup>1-2</sup>

**The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

- 1. Develop An Urban Strategy for Canada which includes:**
  - An integrated approach to policy and program development in order to deliver a cohesive, effective urban strategy;
  - Examining the effect and impact of federal policies and programs on urban regions (i.e. urban lens);
  - A strong urban partnership developed in collaboration with all orders of government, the community, the private sector, and citizens through bilateral, trilateral and multilateral agreements and initiatives;
  - Priority initiatives that include:
    - A National Affordable Housing Program
    - A National Infrastructure Program
    - A National Transportation Program
  - An advisory body to provide on-going consultation and advice on urban policy to the Government of Canada; and
  - Fostering research on best practices, providing intelligence on trends and conditions, and communicating the Government of Canada's activities related to urban issues.
- 2. Initiate further dialogue and debate on the mechanisms required to design and implement an Urban Strategy.**

# Challenges & Opportunities

**O**n May 9th, 2001, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced the creation of a Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues. The creation of this Task Force is the means to fulfilling the Government of Canada's commitment, stated in the Speech from the Throne in January 2001, to engage in a dialogue with citizens, experts, and other orders of government on the opportunities and challenges facing our urban regions.

The Task Force's mission is to explore how the Government of Canada can work more collaboratively, within its federal jurisdiction, to strengthen the quality of life in Canada's large urban centres.

In order to develop a thorough understanding of these issues, the Task Force conducted consultations with federal Ministers and departments, provincial ministers, municipal leaders, urban experts, residents, and representatives from national and community organizations. The Task Force also accepted written submissions from interested organizations and experts.

The Task Force selected eight urban regions in Canada: Halifax, Montreal, the National Capital Region, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver. Members of the Task Force travelled to each of these regions to meet key local experts, organizations, and governments. We met with more than 700 people. These consultations took the form of facilitated roundtable

sessions. Participants explored principles and priorities to guide the Government in its relationship with urban regions, and suggested changes to improve and enhance that role. They discussed local issues, challenges, opportunities, and prospects, as well as options for addressing these issues.

The Task Force heard about civic pride, economic successes, and effective partnerships. However, the Task Force also heard about the many challenges that growth has created for urban regions including programs related to quality of life and economic competitiveness, financial and legislative constraints, and the inability of municipalities to address issues effectively and efficiently without adequate resources.

Municipalities are increasingly demanding recognition of their importance. Municipalities are the creation of the provinces and territories, and constitutionally lie within their jurisdiction. However, issues that affect the quality of life and economic growth are the concern of all orders of government, and indeed affect all Canadians.

There was a broad consensus among participants that the Government of Canada should place more emphasis on the concerns of urban regions for the benefit of the nation as a whole. It should be noted, however, that the success of rural communities is also essential to the well being and economic development

*"Over the last few decades, our cities have prospered and grown to become the places where a majority of Canadians live, work and play. And, while our cities have responded well to many of the challenges of rapid growth, it is clear that strengthened partnerships will be required to sustain and enhance the quality of life in our large urban areas."*

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien  
May 9, 2001

*"When federal actions influence the quality of life of our cities and towns, their competitiveness, their social and demographic character, it would be a real anomaly not to have direct and intense relations between federal and municipal leaders. The absence of such relations would be inconceivable in any federation in the world. Not only can federal-municipal interaction be established while fully respecting the provinces, it can be done with their participation, so that the three orders of government establish a maximum synergy among themselves. This is the goal of the Government of Canada."*

Honourable Stéphane Dion  
Minister of  
Intergovernmental Affairs  
Address at FCM Annual  
General Meeting,  
May 26, 2001

of our country. Indeed, this Government's approach to rural Canada would be an excellent model to follow in strengthening its relationship with urban Canada.

In 1998, this Government sponsored a dialogue with over 7,000 Canadians in rural and isolated regions. The result of this initiative was the integration of a "rural perspective" in the development of federal policies and programs, and the creation of the Rural Secretariat and the Canadian Rural Partnership. This initiative has led to the coordination of Government programs in rural Canada, rural partnerships with local governments, citizens and key stakeholders, a voice for rural Canada in Cabinet, and long-term initiatives in rural communities – all suggestions the Task Force heard during its cross-country consultations on urban issues.

The Government of Canada has always shown an interest and played a key role in urban life. For many years, it has been an active partner with stakeholders at all levels in programs that help ensure that urban Canadians can enjoy safe streets, a strong economy, access to post-secondary education, parks and museums, affordable housing, pensions, and income support for families.

The Government of Canada is a significant investor in urban areas, both in terms of its physical presence and the services which it delivers. In the 2000-2001 fiscal year, the **Government invested** more than **\$55 billion** in direct and indirect **services and programs in large**

**urban areas.** Included in this amount are transfers to the provinces designated for urban regions. As an employer and manager, The Government of Canada spends more than **\$11 billion annually in salaries** (included in above figure) and **owns approximately \$3 billion worth of property** (estimated market value) in urban areas.

Many federal departments have a stake in urban issues through national objectives and international obligations. The Task Force believes that the Government of Canada should examine spending and programs strategically through an "urban dimension or lens." In addition, members of the Task Force believe that communication and cooperation between federal departments and the public is essential to ensure that our investments are really working for the benefit of urban Canadians.

The Task Force heard that the Government of Canada needs to better coordinate its programs and spending in urban areas, strengthen its relationships with partners in government and with community leaders, address cross-jurisdictional issues and international obligations, and enhance community and nation building. Canadians are tired of the constant bickering between orders of government and want to see their elected officials working together to meet their objectives and responsibilities. The Task Force believes that a coordinated, collaborative approach involving all orders of government is needed to ensure the success of urban Canada.

## ECONOMIC CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Economic Growth and Development

As in other countries, the wealth of Canada's urban regions contributes to the success of the provinces in which they are located and to the wealth of the nation as a whole.

The Task Force heard that one of the recurring challenges that hinders economic growth and development is the dependence on property taxes as the largest source of revenue for municipal governments. Ironically, the rate of growth that is a measure of success of the urban centres is constrained by the capacity of municipal governments to raise enough revenue to keep pace with demands. Property tax revenue is limited and does not take into consideration a person's or business' ability to pay. This was an issue almost 30 years ago when it was recognized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in their 1976 report, "*Puppets on a Shoestring*," and it is still the subject of much discussion.

Some provincial and territorial governments have special agreements with their municipalities which allow these cities greater powers to generate revenue and engage in private-public partnerships. Despite these exceptions, the Task Force heard a growing concern from both business and municipal leaders that Canadian urban regions cannot compete as long as they have insufficient revenue. This is especially true given the trend to downloading which has increased responsibilities without increasing revenue sources.

Canada's evolution to an urban

economy has put pressure on all urban centres to sustain economic development and growth. For the country to be economically competitive on a global scale, cities must attract the most innovative and dynamic entrepreneurs and companies.

Companies are looking for centres of learning and innovation, skilled workers, upgraded infrastructure, a competitive cost of doing business, and the highest quality of life. To compete globally, our urban areas must have the appropriate balance and appeal of infrastructure, amenities, lifestyle, and high environmental quality.

Globalization is having an enormous impact on our economy. In a global economy, physical and intellectual assets move easily across national borders. Most of Canada's larger centres are portal cities, and border issues are important to trade and tourism. We must promote Canadian cities internationally as desirable destinations for travel and business. Canada's trade is mainly North-South, with approximately 85% of our exports going to the United States. Canada's ability to compete successfully in American and global markets will depend on the strength of our cities.

The economic success of urban regions is determined to a large extent by the competitiveness of its industry clusters which are "a set of inter-linked private sector industries and public sector institutions whose final production reaches markets outside of the region" [ICF Consulting, 2000].

Canada benefits from a highly

*"Our cities compete with more than 300 city regions worldwide, everyday. These competitor regions are where innovation flourishes, where new economy industries thrive, and where the globe's best talent reside. Their strength drives the success of their national economies. Canadian city regions must be able to compete internationally – it is clear that the future prosperity of our country depends on it."*

Elyse Allan, President and CEO  
Toronto Board of Trade  
March 2002

*In order to attract foreign business, we need to streamline the work of the financial commissioners and create one National Securities Commission.*

The National Capital Region Roundtable  
October 21, 2001 & March 18, 2002

*"Governments need to recognize the earliest signs of emerging clusters and provide community-based support. Each cluster and host community has unique strengths and challenges. The challenge for governments is to provide the right kind of support at the right time to create the conditions for self-sustaining growth. This support often takes the form of infrastructure to enable education, training, networking and research for which there are clear public benefits but no business case for private sector providers."*

Industry Canada  
"Achieving Excellence, Investing in People, Knowledge and Opportunity: Canada's Innovation Strategy." 2001

skilled labour force, however a major barrier is inter-provincial mobility. Canadian workers need to be able to move freely to and from urban areas that need specific trades or skills. In many trades and professions, provincial regulations differ, especially in regard to recognition of qualifications and credentials. This hinders both individual mobility and economic development.

In addition, the emergence of new economic sectors (such as bio-medical, fibre-optics, media, Internet, etc.) means that urban centres need a multi-skilled, multi-faceted workforce. These new kinds of industries rely on huge networks and the clustering of resources, both human and technological. Urban areas must offer a high but affordable quality of life that appeals to people in both the low and high salary ranges. This will attract skilled workers who will in turn attract business and investment.

Canada is at an advantage globally. According to the KPMG's 2002 "Competitive Alternatives" study, Canada is the most cost-efficient country in which to do business; is one of the most connected to the Internet; and has one of the most highly educated labour forces. This makes Canada very attractive for economic investment – much of which is

centralized in urban areas.

The Government of Canada has recognized the importance of urban centres as economic engines. Industry Canada and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) have developed an **Innovation Strategy**, which is a course for improving productivity, increasing research and leading edge innovation, improving the interconnectedness of urban areas regionally, nationally and globally, and improving the quality and number of skilled labour and trades workers. In addition, with leadership from HRDC, the Forum of Labour Market Ministers has been working toward achieving more efficient labour mobility with a goal to ensure full compliance with labour mobility provisions in the Agreement on Internal Trade.

These actions by the Government of Canada are a significant step forward in increasing the competitiveness of our urban centres. Economic development, however, cannot be done by the private sector alone or by a single order of government working in isolation. The Task Force found a strong consensus on the need for the Government of Canada to continue to support economic development. This will also require cooperation and collaboration between all orders of government and the community.<sup>3-4</sup>

#### **The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

3. Continue to collaborate with other orders of government and support development of regional economic growth strategies that establish priority action plans.
4. Continue to work with the Provinces towards the harmonization of inter-provincial professional qualifications and trade certification.

## Innovation and Research

Innovation, research and development are significant factors in an urban region's economic growth and make an important contribution to its competitiveness.

The level of innovation in an economy depends on the skills of the labour force, the amount of investment in research and development, the level of support from governments and the private sector, and the role of universities and research institutes.

Universities have a tremendously positive impact on an urban region's economic health, especially in a knowledge-based economy. Not only do universities train and educate highly skilled individuals, they are also the centres of excellence in research and development. Canada's universities are world leaders in collaboration with industry, as well as in helping urban regions by developing leaders and innovators for Canada's knowledge-based industries. They do provide the environment for research and development that responds to the demands of changing markets. They can also help us regain the top rank in excellence in urban practices. We need to support our post secondary institutions as the educators of Canada's labour force.

The Internet is a necessary tool in the knowledge-based economy. It allows business, governments and citizens to engage with each other in an extremely fast and efficient way – across regions, across the country and across the globe. Markets with suitable communication infrastructures are typically the most attractive, and most successful, economies.

Thus, it is important that broadband infrastructure is increased and enhanced to keep Canada's competitive edge as one of the most connected countries in the world. This includes a particular focus on developing broadband access to rural and remote areas, in order to connect Canadians across the country and around the world.

Interconnectedness is also important between governments and citizens, community groups and private business. E-government, which is an innovative tool that offers government information and services via the Internet, has the potential to increase accountability and service delivery. The Government of Canada is a leader in e-government and is constantly increasing the content of information and services available over the Internet.

Large municipalities are often at the forefront of e-government services, but effective implementation faces potential problems such as the cost of development and content, access to expertise, and the cost of security for a website. Overcoming these problems can benefit both governments and citizens by clarifying the responsibilities of various orders of government, increasing communication with citizens and, in some cases, increase speed of service delivery. The sharing of expertise and best practices can create cost savings and improve consistency of e-government services between governments.

The Government of Canada has shown leadership in many areas of innovation and research. Industry Canada launched the **Innovation**

*Regional economies will benefit from investments in innovation and research at universities, and from assistance in funding research on the implementation of ideas into the market place.*

Winnipeg Roundtable  
October 11-12, 2001

*"Significant investments in electronic infrastructure are necessary to ensure Canada's long-term productivity, economic growth and competitiveness."*

Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
'National Municipal Electronic Infrastructure Program'  
October 2001

*"Innovation is an economic driver. It is one of the most important means to improve competitiveness, generate wealth, create jobs, and sustain high quality of life. But innovation does not exist in isolation. It requires a fertile environment in which to grow – an environment that government, business, investors, the financial community, universities and individual Canadians all affect and, to some extent, control."*

'Investing in Innovation'  
Conference Board of Canada

**Strategy** and several other programs that involve partnership with the private sector, other orders of government and the community. The goal of the Government of Canada's **Connecting Canadians Strategy** is to ensure all Canadians have access to the Internet through schools and libraries. This program has invested **more than \$55 million** in our urban centres through the **Community Access Program**.

Industry Canada has implemented several relevant programs and strategies in partnership with universities and the private sector. The **Technology Partnerships Canada (TPC) program** has invested more than **\$1.8 billion in urban centres** during the 2000-2001 fiscal year. In addition, the Government of Canada is investing millions of dollars in research institutions and universities by sponsoring research chairs and Centres of Excellence to encourage research and development, and bring innovative technology to market.

The **Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI)** is a successful demonstration of how the Government of Canada, the private sector, non-government groups and other orders of government can work together towards a common objective. The focus of the SCI is to

brand Canada as a reliable source of advanced technologies and knowledge about sustainable communities. It has shown that by sharing our expertise and addressing development problems in other countries, we can increase our sales abroad and enhance our presence in foreign markets.

Conference Board of Canada research shows that Canadian firms are not as innovative as they could be and that innovative performance is poor compared to other OECD countries. There is a need to continue to focus on innovation to ensure Canada's future economic prosperity.<sup>5-7</sup>

### **Sustainable Infrastructure**

Every day, businesses and citizens rely on basic government services and physical infrastructure like telecommunications and the Internet, water and sewage treatment, highways, public transit, airports, and power lines. Maintaining current systems and building new infrastructure is critical to sustaining the quality of life for all citizens as well as the day-to-day operations of private companies. Sustainable infrastructure is the foundation for economic growth and development, and is one of the main components of any strategy to promote economic competitiveness.

#### **The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

5. Build on the success of the Sustainable Cities Initiative and continue to brand and support Canadian urban centres as sources of innovation and sustainability.
6. Build on existing partnerships with universities and the public/private sectors to support and facilitate research and development, and innovation.
7. Continue to invest in e-government programs.

The Task Force heard from civic officials that they were once proud of their infrastructure but that lack of resources and rapid growth has caused much of their older infrastructure systems to fall into disrepair and require significant investment. This is most evident in the areas of transportation, water and wastewater.

Although Canadian urban areas are experiencing high rates of economic and population growth, municipal governments are often unable to handle the associated costs. Growth makes it necessary to build new infrastructure for new areas, renew ageing infrastructure, and maintain existing systems.

A recent report by Enid Slack for the C.D. Howe Institute entitled *"Municipal Finance and the Pattern of Urban Growth"* (February 2002) highlights the on-going problem of municipal tax structures which encourage low-density developments that typically have higher associated infrastructure requirements and consequently, higher costs for municipal governments.

The challenge of creating sustainable infrastructure must involve municipal, provincial and federal governments. Public-private partnerships are an innovative and creative approach to finding solutions. Many urban centres are partnering with the public/private sector to finance and operate various infrastructure projects

such as highways and wastewater treatment facilities.

The Government of Canada must continue to recognize the financial difficulties of municipal governments in maintaining, replacing and constructing infrastructure. In recognition of this problem, the Government of Canada has established several infrastructure programs targeted towards projects in both urban and rural areas such as the **five-year, \$2.05 billion Infrastructure Canada Program** and the more recent **\$2 billion Strategic Infrastructure Fund**. The Strategic Infrastructure Fund is designed for the Government of Canada to work with provincial and municipal governments, as well as public-private partnerships, to achieve significant objectives in maintaining and creating large sustainable infrastructure projects. In addition, there are initiatives underway such as the development of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the National Research Council's (NRC) Canadian Guide for Sustainable Infrastructure. This guide will be a catalogue of best planning, design and implementation practices to be applied to cities across Canada.

The Government of Canada must be involved in the process of ensuring that Canada's physical infrastructure will have longevity and durability. The focus should be on finding creative solutions that involve all orders of government as well as the private sector.<sup>8</sup>

*Most of Toronto's infrastructure is more than 30 years old. In order to remain competitive, urban regions need to be able to access long-term, sustainable funding to repair and maintain infrastructure.*

Toronto Roundtable  
October 9-10, 2001

*"The modern economy of the 21st century requires a backbone of sound physical infrastructure to sustain the nation's growth and quality of life...Investments in infrastructure will stimulate job creation and confidence in the short term and make the economy more productive and competitive in the long term."*

#### **The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

8. Establish a long-term National Infrastructure Program that will build on current programs to provide stable, reliable funding (i.e. 15 years).

The Budget Plan 2001

*"Traffic congestion is becoming an ever-greater economic drain and environmental threat, and the costs of driving continue to increase. In response, national transit ridership has risen every year since 1996, and jumped 3.4% in the last year alone. We need to capitalize on this momentum with better service, rather than extinguish it with an indifferent response."*

'At the Crossroads: Towards a Federal Vision for Urban Transit'  
Canadian Urban Transit Association, May 2001

### Integrated, Multi-modal Transportation

Transportation infrastructure is a key component of economic competitiveness as well as quality of life in urban areas. The quick, efficient transportation of goods and passengers is vital. When modes of transportation are inadequate to meet demand, and are hampered by congestion and traffic gridlock, the consequences are significant.

Gridlock is seriously affecting competitiveness in our urban regions. Access to airports and ports, freight pickup and delivery, just-in-time delivery schedules, and business activities are all hindered by congestion. Road congestion causes huge losses to productivity and commercial revenues. It also results in greater fuel consumption, additional emission of air pollutants, and greenhouse gases. Congestion is affecting the quality of life in urban areas. Canadians are spending more and more time in cars, stuck in traffic, on their daily commutes to and from work, school and recreation. The lack of adequate alternative forms of transportation such as public transit and bicycle and walking trails also adds to the problem.

The Task Force heard that transportation is a major concern – from backlogged cars and trucks on major roads through Montreal, to pressure on the few routes that connect Ottawa and Gatineau, to congestion on major roads into Calgary's downtown core, to gridlock on the Lions Gate Bridge into Vancouver. Urban transportation must be improved. The Task Force heard that congestion costs an estimated \$2 billion in the Greater

Toronto Area alone through lost productivity.

The costs of building, maintaining and expanding transportation infrastructure is mainly the responsibility of municipal government and with escalating growth in urban regions, the number of vehicles on the roads has increased exponentially.

Congestion is not so much a symptom of not enough roads, but of not investing enough in other forms of transportation.

Transportation links and infrastructure are essential to the flow of goods and people.

Integrating modes of transportation could improve this flow by reducing reliance on some modes of transportation and encouraging others. Multi-modal transportation will improve economic competitiveness and development, the environment and quality of life.

Current federal infrastructure programs, including the **Strategic Infrastructure Fund**, already focus on roads, highways and public transit. As well, Transport Canada is currently working with the Canadian Urban Transit Association, Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other federal departments to help develop a strategic vision for urban transit. The Government has committed **\$600 million**, from 2002-2006, to the **Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIP)** to improve transportation routes throughout Canada, and in particular at border crossings with the United States. The Government of Canada is promoting the use of urban transit with the pilot **ECOPASS project** that allows civil

servants to pay for transit passes through automatic salary deductions.

The Task Force heard from municipal governments, businesses and non-governmental groups that all orders of government must invest more in urban transit. Tripartite cooperation and agreements between the orders of government, as well as partnerships with the private sector, will be key to solving congestion problems.

Members of the Task Force believe that a special emphasis should be placed on improving accessibility and service of public transit, improving regional transit systems, connecting

airports to downtowns with passenger rail lines, increasing freight rail use, improving conditions of ports, and preserving abandoned rail corridors for future light rail transit use or for the development of walking and bike trails.

Canada is the only G8 country without a national urban transit investment program. The Task Force believes it is time that the Government of Canada develop a program to specifically address urban transit. The United States' *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* may be a model worth examining.<sup>9-10</sup>

*Light rail transit expansion and major interchanges on the Yellowhead Trail are priorities that must be met to address Edmonton's transportation needs.*

Edmonton Roundtable  
August 23, 2001

**The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

- 9. Establish A National Transportation Program that would:**
  - Provide long-term sustainable funding for public transportation systems;**
  - Invest strategically in integrated multi-modal transportation systems; and**
  - Invest in high-speed rail service to connect major centres.**
- 10. Ensure that unused railway rights-of-way and corridors are preserved and made available at net salvage value or at no cost for future transit or be developed into recreational trails.**

## SOCIAL CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Canada: a Land of Opportunity

*"... Poverty is primarily an urban phenomenon – a poor person is more likely to live in an urban area than elsewhere."*

Kevin Lee,  
"Urban Poverty in Canada,"  
Canadian Council on Social  
Development, 2000

The Government of Canada must ensure that Canada is a land of opportunity for all Canadians, despite economic, social or physical differences. Our urban areas are home to a growing number of vulnerable people and more must be done to address social problems such as poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, and marginalization. The working poor and their children, single-parent families, seniors, urban Aboriginals, and people with disabilities are most often at risk.

One of the most evident inequalities in urban areas is income polarization. The number of individuals below the low income cut-off is on the rise in urban areas. In 1998, more than 5 million people were below the low income cut-off before taxes. Over half (55.0%) of these individuals live in Canada's largest metropolitan areas – which account for 49.3% of the population.

#### Persons with low income before tax for Urban Regions, 1998

All Urban Regions 500,000+	19.4%
Halifax	17.9%
Québec City	20.3%
Montréal	29.0%
Ottawa-Gatineau	20.9%
Toronto	14.8%
Hamilton-Burlington	12.7%
London	15.5%
Winnipeg	21.0%
Calgary	16.7%
Edmonton	17.8%
Vancouver	16.1%

*Source: CANSIM II. Statistics Canada*

A more recent report by the United Way of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) entitled "A Decade of Decline" shows the income gap has widened between wealthy and less well off households as the proportion of low income families rises (16.8% to 20% in Toronto) and the proportion of higher income families rises (18% to 23.2% in Toronto). These numbers are indicative of a trend across the country and also reflect a growing income gap between neighbourhoods.

Those below the low income cut-off line tend to be seniors and the working poor, single-parent families, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, women, and Aboriginals.

Child and family poverty is increasing in Canadian cities. By continuing to seek out solutions to the problems of poverty, we can optimize child development and lifelong learning, as well as encourage community building and social inclusion.

The Government of Canada has recognized the importance of this issue with its **National Children's Agenda** and the **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement (2000)**. However, much more needs to be done before we see the elimination of child poverty in Canada.

Another significant concern is the growing problem of alcohol and substance abuse and all the social challenges that accompany these addictions. **A National Drug Strategy** is needed to enhance prevention measures, improve treatment and rehabili-

tation, and support an expanded range of enforcement and control responses, such as drug treatment courts. It will also emphasize international cooperation to fight the war on drugs, and provide support for research and evaluation. [Opportunity for All: The Liberal Plan, November 2000]

The **Vancouver Agreement** is an excellent model of federal-provincial-municipal cooperation with an initial focus on addressing the escalating crisis of disease, crime, poverty and homelessness in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The Agreement provides a five-year strategy for achieving a sustainable community. So far the results are positive and encouraging. Other areas with similar concerns – Montreal with prostitution, Halifax with crime among young people – could learn from the Vancouver experience.

To benefit from the range of programs and services available in our urban areas, individuals must have access to them. This is especially difficult for people with disabilities and seniors. There are problems in regard to adequate housing policies (independent living), accessible transit (including para-transit), access to community

buildings like libraries, recreation centres, and museums, and other community programs and services. It is important that the Government of Canada work towards promoting the integration of all individuals, and encourage sensitivity in communities.

The Government of Canada should continue to address these issues so as to ensure that everyone can enjoy living and working in their communities. We must promote the Canadian values of understanding, tolerance and respect in order that all individuals have a chance to contribute to society.<sup>11-13</sup>

### Adequate Shelter for All

In nearly every major urban region, the Task Force heard that the shortage of affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges affecting economic competitiveness and quality of life. Municipal governments and housing providers cannot meet the demand for affordable housing and emergency shelter. As more and more people migrate to cities, the pressure to find suitable accommodation has a ripple effect on society as a whole. As competition for existing housing stock intensifies, tenants at the lower end of the

#### **The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

- 11. Review the federal income support systems to ensure they are meeting the needs of Canada's most vulnerable population.**
- 12. Continue to work with all orders of government and childcare agencies to ensure that all children have access to quality childcare and early education, and reaffirm our commitment to eliminating child poverty.**
- 13. Implement a National Drug Strategy that will involve all orders of government, community agencies and the voluntary sector.**

market increasingly have no choice but to turn to shelters or remain in already overcrowded conditions.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation estimates that 1.7 million families are in "core housing need." The majority of these are families with children, senior citizens and Aboriginal households. [CMHC Annual Report 2001]

The situation is compounded by a number of other factors such as very low vacancy rates, rising rents, little new rental housing, both private and social – from approx. 37,000 to less than 2,000 annually over the past four years – and a high cost of land. It is estimated that about 656,000 families pay over 50% of their income on rent – 20% more than families are expected to pay for shelter. This leaves precious little for food, clothing, transportation and personal necessities. [CMHC Annual Report 2001]

Our ageing population has also put enormous pressure on housing providers to build suitable affordable housing. Seniors need housing that is

not only affordable but close to shops, services and transit in neighbourhoods where they feel comfortable and support services are accessible.

Homelessness is a complex problem that is a result of the many pressures in urban society: shortage of affordable housing, overflowing emergency shelters, lack of support systems for people at risk, unemployment and poverty. Mental illness and addiction are also significant causes of homelessness. The number of people pan-handling, sleeping on the streets, or living in shelters is a clear indication that the social safety net, which Canada is so proud of, is clearly failing a segment of society. Calgary roundtable participants told the Task Force that on any given night approximately 1,200 people in their city are sleeping in shelters. At the Toronto roundtable, we were told the city provides emergency accommodation for approximately 30,000 people a year, and these numbers are rising.

If Canada is judged on how it deals with these issues, then it appears that there is still much to be done. The challenge is enormous. However, by working together on long-term solutions, we can address the needs of the marginalized in society. This effort must include all orders of government, citizens and community organizations.

Following reports on homelessness such as the "Golden Report" that declared homelessness a crisis in Toronto and other large Canadian cities, the Government of Canada appointed a federal coordinator who conducted an intensive examination

*"Lack of adequate and appropriate housing limits the opportunities for people in terms of education, employment, and participation in society generally."*

Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership; April 2001

#### Rental Vacancy Rates for Urban Regions, 2000

Calgary	1.2%
Edmonton	1.4%
Gatineau	1.1%
Halifax	3.5%
Kitchener	0.7%
Montreal	1.5%
Ottawa	0.2%
Québec City	1.5%
Regina	1.4%
Toronto	0.6%
Vancouver	1.3%
Winnipeg	2.0%

*Source: CMHC, 2001*

and analysis of the issue. In December 1999, the **National Homelessness Initiative (NHI)** was launched which **committed \$753 million** to resolving this urgent situation. Of that, a large proportion was allocated to programs for groups most at risk. **Forty-three million** was allocated to CMHC **Shelter Enhancement Program**, \$59 million to the **Urban Aboriginal Strategy**, and **\$59 million** to the **Youth Homelessness Component**.

Under the **Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)**, a cornerstone of the NHI, **\$305 million** is available for equal cost-sharing agreements with voluntary, non-profit, public or private sector groups. SCPI assists communities to implement local strategies to prevent and reduce homelessness.

The Government of Canada allocated a total of **\$680 million in the 2001 Budget spread over five years for an affordable housing program**. The Finance Minister recognized the necessity for a collaborative approach when he said, "Housing is a basic need.....and meeting that need must be the responsibility of us all" [Budget Speech to the House of Commons, December 10, 2001]. The commitment is based on a cost-sharing partnership with the provinces on parameters laid out by the Government of Canada and agreed upon by all parties. Thus far, Quebec, British Columbia, Nunavut and the North West Territories have signed a bilateral agreement.

For many years, the Government of Canada has been a partner with the non-profit sector in developing, building, funding and managing housing

projects; from transition shelters for women to co-op housing. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Government's national housing agency, disbursed almost **\$820 million** to 13 cities during 2000/2001 and this includes subsidies for public housing, non-profit housing and co-op housing. Through the **Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)**, CMHC also spent more than **\$100 million** annually on renovating existing housing.

Canada Lands Company Ltd. an arms-length non-agent Crown Corporation, is making an important contribution to increasing the stock of affordable housing through the disposal of surplus government lands. To date, **16,000 new and refurbished residential units** have been created across the country and **\$32 million** has been spent to clean up urban spaces to be used for residential and commercial development. [Canada Lands Company Ltd. Annual Report, 2000-2001].

The Task Force heard from community groups and voluntary organizations that are working to provide affordable low-cost housing for needy families. For many of these groups, such as Habitat for Humanity and Options for Homes, the challenges of working with limited funds and finding suitable land require resourceful and inventive thinking. The Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS), for example, is working in partnership with Concert Properties of Vancouver to invest in medium to low market rental housing as well as in other large infrastructure projects. It is important to

*"Homelessness is the tip of the iceberg. For every homeless person visible on the street, four families are at risk of losing the roof over their head."*

FCM

"A National Affordable Housing Strategy"  
October 2000

acknowledge and support such groups and include them in any affordable housing strategy.

Despite these initiatives, there is still a critical shortage of housing. A strong and effective urban partnership will provide the foundation to realize the goals of providing “shelter for all.”<sup>14-15</sup>

### **Urban Aboriginal People**

The past fifty years have seen a dramatic increase in the rate of urbanization among the Aboriginal population. In 1951, only seven per cent of Aboriginal people lived in urban areas. Today, more than half of all Aboriginal

people live off reserve, the majority concentrated in cities. Recent estimates indicate that the urban Aboriginal population is expected to dramatically increase over the next decade [*Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) projection 1991-2016*]. The most highly urbanized segments of the Aboriginal population are the Métis and non-status Indian populations. Like many others, Aboriginal people are drawn to urban centres by the attraction of employment, education, and a better quality of life.

The urbanization of Aboriginal Canada reads like a tale of two cities. Many Aboriginal people arrive in cities

**The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

14. Establish A National Affordable Housing Program that could include:
  - Strengthening the mandate of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to develop A National Affordable Housing Program in collaboration with all orders of government, and housing providers;
  - Building on existing federal housing programs;
  - Changes to CMHC mortgage underwriting criteria to allow a more customized and flexible system;
  - Providing additional resources and flexibility in the RRAP program to rehabilitate existing properties;
  - Examining the federal tax environment related to rental housing and creating appropriate incentives;
  - Establishing grants against the cost of CMHC mortgage insurance;
  - Providing targeted mortgage insurance for brownfield redevelopment in areas where there is a shortage of affordable housing;
  - Facilitating agreements with municipalities to transfer small tracts of surplus land, owned by the Canada Lands Company, to community groups; and
  - Offering grants to community housing groups to support the restoration and conversion of heritage properties for affordable housing.
15. Extend the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) beyond three years in order to meet its objectives to eliminate homelessness.

ill-equipped to face the many challenges that come with adjusting to, and living in, an urban environment. They often "face overwhelming problems that are rooted in cultural dislocation and powerlessness, discrimination and economic hardship" [RCAP, 1996].

Compared to non-Aboriginal people, urban Aboriginal people have lower incomes, lower labour force participation rates, and higher rates of unemployment, lower education, a higher rate of incarceration, and more welfare dependency. While urban Aboriginal people in general live in disadvantaged circumstances, Aboriginal women, and more specifically Aboriginal single mothers, are the most disadvantaged.

A study released by CCSD on urban poverty found that in 1995, Aboriginal people were more than twice as likely to live in poverty as non-Aboriginal people and today the situation is much the same. Nowhere is the incidence of poverty more pronounced than in western urban centres. In Regina, for instance, Aboriginal people accounted for approximately 24.3% of the poor population – more than three times the proportion of the total population. Nationally, average income for Aboriginal people is 33% below the average income for non-Aborigines and unemployment rates are almost twice as high. Given the relatively high concentration of Aboriginal people in western Canada, the adverse economic and social conditions in these centres very much determine the outcome for the Aboriginal population as a whole.

There are some positive developments. In recent decades, a sizeable

urban Aboriginal middle class has emerged; a growing number of Aboriginal people are graduating from post-secondary institutions. There are now 30,000 graduates and another 27,000 Inuit and First Nations students enrolled in colleges and universities across Canada. [Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada. Submission to the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, February 2002]

The urban Aboriginal population is significantly younger than the non-Aboriginal population and is the most rapidly growing of all groups. Almost half of all Aboriginal people under 25 years of age live in urban areas where they face considerable challenges. The Task Force heard that more educational supports are needed in elementary and secondary schools for urban Aboriginals. While Aboriginal youth hold out great promise, if the challenges they face are ignored it will have dire consequences for both Aboriginal communities and Canadian society as a whole.

The Task Force learned that the lack of affordable housing is one of the most serious problems facing urban Aboriginal people. Inner-city ghettos are developing with street gangs, crime, substance abuse and other social ills. A collaborative approach to housing and crime is needed if this serious situation is to be resolved. If we ignore these problems, our social peace will inevitably suffer.

Task Force member, The Honourable Thelma Chalifoux, Senator (Alberta), Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on

*There is a need for a national vision for urban Aboriginal people which includes funding and resources for programs such as pre-employment and life skills training, affordable housing, youth initiatives and health programs.*

Vancouver Roundtable  
November 15-16, 2001

Aboriginal Peoples, makes the following important points in regard to housing issues:

- Throughout Canada, the First Nations, the Metis and the Inuit each have their own housing societies. Some of these programs allow all Aboriginal groups to rent from each other but others do not. A status-blind regulation MUST be included in all operating agreements to ensure fair and equitable access to a national housing strategy.
- With many federal/provincial transfer agreements still being negotiated, this has caused much confusion over jurisdiction. Nationwide, there are approximately 11,000 Aboriginal housing units in urban centres to serve a growing population, many of who are considered in dire need and require adequate shelter.

■ In order to deal effectively with the many social problems associated with the lack of housing in our urban centres, partnerships with existing aboriginal housing providers must be a priority. Inner city shelter providers and municipal governments must be included in any partnership initiatives. The Government of Canada has recognized the growing problems of the urban Aboriginal population with a specific **Urban Aboriginal Strategy**. It is estimated that **a total of \$270 million annually** is directed to urban Aboriginal programming through a variety of projects. For example, the **National Homelessness Initiative** is supporting the Urban Aboriginal Strategy with **\$59 million for emer-**

The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:

16. Review the policy and planning process for funding of programs for urban Aboriginal people, and develop a more collaborative and coordinated approach with other orders of government to strategically fund and better deliver services and programs to Aboriginal people in urban areas.
17. Partner with other orders of government and community Aboriginal groups to find ways to lower poverty levels, provide employment opportunities and expand the stock of affordable housing for urban Aboriginal population, especially among youth.
18. Work with our urban partners to increase the number of pilot projects in selected urban centres as currently included in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.
19. Encourage cooperation between Urban Reserves and surrounding urban regions.
20. Examine current policies and develop ways to target the special needs of the Urban Aboriginal population, including Metis and non-Status Indians.
21. Strengthen educational supports, in cooperation with First Nations, Metis and non-status Indians at post secondary levels to better meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples in urban centres.

**gency shelters** and other responses to tackle homelessness among the Aboriginal population.

In order to improve the effectiveness of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, there must be greater coordination between government departments and orders of government, coupled with additional resources to test innovative approaches. The Task Force believes the Urban Aboriginal Strategy should coordinate programming directed towards urban Aboriginals.

Questions of jurisdictional responsibility for urban Aboriginal people have only added to the complexity of the issue. All orders of government must make a sustained effort to work together to improve the lives of urban Aboriginal people.<sup>16-21</sup>

### **Canada: A Country Built on Immigration**

Canada has always been a land of opportunity for millions of immigrants and refugees, and continues to be so. Immigration is the basis of our multicultural society and contributes to our Canadian values of understanding, tolerance and respect.

Approximately 220,000 immigrants and refugees enter Canada each year. Eighty-five per cent flow into urban centres. Approximately 48% of immigrants and refugees settled in Toronto, 15% in Vancouver, 12% in Montreal, and 8% collectively in Calgary, Ottawa-Carleton, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, London, Quebec City, Halifax, Regina, Saskatoon, and Victoria [Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Submission to Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, 2001].

Highly skilled immigrants and temporary workers are important in the development of a knowledge-based economy. Many industries are experiencing a critical shortage of highly skilled construction workers, plumbers, electricians, stonemasons, carpenters, and tool and die makers. Immigrant skilled labour contributes significantly to the economic growth of the urban centres.

The measure of success of any immigration policy is in the integration of individuals and families into their communities. For many families, assistance with housing, employment and support for their children is essential to overcoming the barriers to smooth integration and becoming independent. Within a short time, newcomers are able to contribute economically, socially, and culturally to the fabric of Canadian society. In the 2000-2001 fiscal year, **CIC spent more than \$320 million for settlement and language programs** in large urban regions, with most of this money going into Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. This is in addition to transfer payments to the provinces under the Canada Health and Social Transfer. The Task Force was also told that current programs are sometimes too short term to be effective and consequently, municipal governments must fill in the gaps with their support programs.

Immigrants face several challenges integrating into Canadian society. A major barrier is language. The shortage of resources for English and French as a Second Language, and skills training for immigrants often hinders their ability to enter the work

*Immigration is an important source of new manpower and ideas. The Government should invest more in immigration and ensure that immigration policy reflects the needs of urban regions.*

Montreal Roundtable  
November 12-13, 2001

force and fill labour shortages. Thus, language classes, especially for women and children, are one of the most important services offered by resettlement agencies. Another barrier is the lack of recognition for foreign educational and professional qualifications. Even highly skilled professional

immigrants often have difficulty finding jobs in their field because professional associations do not always accept their foreign credentials.

The City of Ottawa, in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada, and community and business partners, operates "Partners for Jobs",

**The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

22. Develop a cohesive approach that involves the coordination between orders of government, and non-governmental organizations that offer settlement services, language training and cultural resources to better meet the needs of the immigrant population.
23. Review with provincial and municipal governments the formula for funding settlement, integration programs and services in urban centres.
24. Consult and work with urban regions on immigration policies/programs.
25. Increase the resources to non-government organizations and community groups to provide additional support services for families, particularly language classes for women and their children.
26. Inform prospective immigrants and new arrivals about conditions and services in Canada BEFORE they leave their country of origin, and include a well-developed and up-to-date "Welcome to Canada" package listing the various services available to newcomers.
27. Streamline the Immigration and Refugee Board process in order to ensure that all claims are processed with maximum efficiency and as expeditiously as possible.
28. Provide access to appropriate upgrading/training programs for newcomers, as well as assessment of credentials and access to trades and professions.
29. Encourage Human Resources Development Canada to enter into more sectoral agreements to facilitate the quick and efficient entry of temporary foreign workers to fill national and regional labour shortages.
30. Convene a bi-annual Conference on Immigration with all orders of government. This will assist provinces and urban regions with declining populations to benefit from national expertise and resources to attract newcomers.
31. Continue negotiations with provincial governments that have not yet signed the bilateral agreement on immigration policies.

a successful and innovative employment program which is helping immigrants find work.

Lack of affordable housing is another significant problem for immigrants. With low vacancy rates and high rents in our urban regions, many newcomers cannot find adequate and affordable housing for themselves and their families. The combination of inadequate resettlement programs, difficulties in finding suitable employment, and the shortage of affordable housing often leads to a life of poverty for a large number of immigrants.

[The Working Group on Poverty, 1998].

Refugees to Canada have their own particular set of challenges, but also face many of the same obstacles as immigrants. The biggest issues are the need for temporary housing or shelter, and access to health and social services.

Immigration has the potential to contribute more to the knowledge-based economy, a strong labour force, quality of life, and Canada's cultural mosaic. Planning the right policies and programs in partnership with relevant departments, community agencies and all orders of government is essential to helping newcomers contribute to Canada's human capital.<sup>22-31</sup>

### **Safe Communities – Healthy Neighbourhoods**

Canadians want to feel safe and secure knowing they are well protected and that appropriate services will respond in the event of an emergency.

Preventing crime and making our streets safe lies in identifying problems early and addressing the economic and social risk factors that

exist in some communities. This can best be achieved by police forces and community agencies, which have a first hand view of the conditions that prevail.

In many communities across Canada, community organizations, business leaders, police services and both provincial and municipal governments have formed partnerships to develop innovative strategies to help deal with community safety issues specific to their communities. As an example of successful community partnerships, both the "John School" and "Streetlight Support Services" programs have been established in many urban regions to address problems with prostitution. A number of these strategies have become so successful they have been copied by other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world.

In a number of ethno-specific communities specific programs have been developed to deal with issues in those communities. For example, the Jamaican Canadian Association through their Building Hope Coalition is working at forming partnerships to develop their Black Youth Violence - Causes and Cures program that will assist African-Canadian youth. This program as well as others throughout Canada should be encouraged and supported.

**The National Crime Prevention Program** with an annual budget of **\$68 million** has recently announced a project in the San Romanoway community in Toronto. By funding this project, the Government of Canada helped leverage additional funding from the business community to

*"More and more, international analysts are arguing that arts and culture may aid in attracting and retaining skilled workers, and ultimately to establishing a strong, visible and globally competitive economy. At the same time, there is a growing body of research indicating that arts and culture has a strong positive impact on the quality of life within cities, creating a vibrant urban culture of creativity and innovation."*

'Culture and Economic Competitiveness: an Emerging Role for Arts in Canada'  
Canada West Foundation  
March 2002

assist with much needed programming for youth. This project is just one example from hundreds of similar projects, where the Government of Canada has invested funds in partnership with community, business and other orders of government.

The importance of emergency response teams has increased in light of recent events. Emergency preparedness for terrorist attacks and natural disasters is a major concern for all urban regions. The ability to handle a crisis depends on the cooperation of many, including all orders of government, hospitals, fire and police services.

The Government of Canada is supporting this response in many ways. For example, in Budget 2001, **\$513 million over five years** was set aside to strengthen Canada's ability to respond to chemical/biological/radiological and nuclear terrorism. There is also a program to assist our urban regions in training first responders through the **National Counter-Terrorism Operational Readiness Program**. In February 2001, the **Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness** was established to ensure communities have the capacity to respond to significant emergencies.<sup>32-33</sup>

## Preserving our Heritage and Culture

Strong communities create strong cities, which are attractive and competitive. Building strong communities involves fostering civil society, promoting arts and culture, and preserving heritage and history.

Urban regions must be showcases of regional, national, and international culture. Witnesses told the Task Force that, in the large urban regions, cultural institutions – museums, art galleries, theatre, and music – have been experiencing difficult times as a result of insufficient resources. In cities in other countries, cultural competitiveness is a vital component for any city to be regarded as a sophisticated, successful city. Our urban regions must engage in a discussion over the funding and visioning of culture. The Task Force recommends that a central principle of urban policy must be for the Government of Canada to continue to participate in arts and cultural development. Canada's urban regions must strive to be international centres of excellence.

Heritage sites are important to the character of our cities and must be protected. However, the restoration of heritage buildings can be an expen-

### The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:

32. Continue to provide resources and cooperate with all orders of government and communities to ensure that police and emergency services have sufficient resources to adequately protect Canadians.
33. Continue to support innovative community-driven initiatives through our crime prevention program.

sive endeavour. There are some good examples of historical buildings that have been restored and converted into valuable commercial space or much needed housing. The Task Force heard that community groups need help to restore valuable buildings and make use of their space.

The Government of Canada should build upon the excellent programs promoting arts, culture and heritage site preservation that already exist under the Department of Canadian Heritage. This includes the **National Arts Training Contribution Programs, Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability Program, and Connecting Canadians to the Arts**. As for heritage sites, Heritage Canada recently announced a **\$24 million** investment strategy called the **Historic Places Conservation Initiative**.<sup>34-35</sup>

### **Building Communities**

Volunteers are a significant resource and asset in any community. It is estimated that there are more than 175,000 civil society groups in Canada and 6.5 million Canadians volunteer their time and energy every year. Community groups and charitable organizations often serve areas that governments and the private sec-

tor are unable to reach. Civil society and volunteerism are important to building human capital and maintaining social peace in urban regions.

The Government of Canada is strongly committed to strengthening its relationship with the voluntary sector and in June 2000 launched **The Voluntary Sector Initiative** which invested **\$94.6 million** to support a number of activities. This commitment was taken a step further in December 2001 when **\$50 million** was allocated over five years to the **Volunteer Canada Initiative**.

Non-profit organizations such as United Way and Community Foundations are playing a significant role in civil society. For example, in Canada, there are over 114 Community Foundations with combined total assets exceeding more than \$1.4 billion professionally invested in diverse portfolios. Income earned on these investments is returned to the community in the form of grants to various non-profit groups, projects and programs. Organizations such as these are an effective way for communities to pool investments and charitable gifts to create an effective financing tool.

Building a civil society is important to creating successful cities with a

*We should continue to build on the Volunteer Canada Initiative which recognizes the importance of citizenship and volunteerism in the building of communities and human capital.*

Calgary Roundtable  
February 1, 2002

**The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada should:**

34. Continue to strengthen our investment in the arts and cultural sector in our urban communities.
35. Provide grants to support the restoration and conversion of heritage properties and develop mechanisms to encourage redevelopment and restoration for both commercial and residential uses.

high quality of life where investors want to do business and people want to live and work. It is important that the Government of Canada support

organizations like United Way and Community Foundations as they attract and encourage private investment and endowments.<sup>36-38</sup>

**The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

36. Consider mechanisms to encourage more investments and donations to Community Foundations, philanthropic and charitable organizations, and community groups.
37. Facilitate the sharing of best practises among the voluntary sector and charitable organizations.
38. Continue to acknowledge and recognize the important contribution of the volunteer sector to building a nation of strong communities.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Safe Water

The issue of water quality is part of the larger challenge of balancing the health of the environment with the social and economic elements that make our cities liveable and competitive. Safe water is a growing concern among Canadians as a result of the recent experience in Walkerton, Ontario, and North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

The careless practice of dumping sewage and waste into bodies of water near urban areas has undermined public confidence in water safety. Toxic chemicals from brownfield sites and harmful industrial practices have penetrated the water table in some areas and the run-off from farms has also contaminated the water. Although waste removal practices have improved and are now more environmentally sensitive, the effects of old practices still linger. In addition, the treatment of water and wastewater is not uniform across the country with some municipalities still using outdated purification methods. The result is that water quality varies from place to place.

Across Canada, there have been a number of successes in finding the appropriate balance between industrial activity and water quality. The City of Toronto, for example, adopted a sewer-use bylaw that places strict limits on the use of 38 otherwise unrestricted chemicals. By 2007 there is expected to be a 25% to 50% reduction in toxic discharges from Toronto into Lake Ontario. As well, the Halifax Metropolitan Region has been working

towards a \$300 million project to eliminate the flow of raw sewage into Halifax Harbour. The city is building three new wastewater treatment plants and a separate sewage collection system to collect and treat up to 180 million litres of raw sewage and other waste, which would otherwise flow into the harbour.

Participants told the Task Force that disasters like Walkerton must be avoided. The demands for enforceable water quality standards for drinking water, surface water and groundwater were loud and clear. The Government of Canada must encourage municipalities to share best practices among all orders of government. In addition, the Government should continue to provide support in the areas of environmental research and development to assist municipal governments to develop zoning and urban design strategies.

The Government of Canada, in cooperation with provinces and territories, established **Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality** that set maximum acceptable concentrations and levels of various substances found in private and municipal water sources. Environment Canada provides funding to the **Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention** to help municipalities use a pollution prevention approach to handling wastewater. This has led to water pollution prevention projects in the City of Toronto, the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Region of Waterloo and the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Environment

*"In urban areas, as low as 3% of GHG emissions is caused by public transit. In this context, one must admit that public transit will have in the very near future an important role to play by offering a true alternative to the GHG problem."*

'A company worth discovering'  
STCUM, 2000

Canada is pursuing the protection and restoration of watersheds threatened by pollution, development and overuse, through programs like the **Great Lakes Sustainability Fund**.

In addition, through the **Infrastructure Canada Program** the Government has helped fund several municipal projects for water and wastewater facilities. The **\$50 million Green Municipal Enabling Fund** and the **\$200 million Green Municipal Investment Fund** operated with FCM has also helped municipalities improve water and wastewater treatment among other environmental initiatives.

The Government of Canada should maintain a cooperative approach to establishing guidelines for safe drinking water and water quality through discussions with provincial officials on the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and with Canadian Ministers of Health.<sup>39-41</sup>

### Clean Air

Air quality affects the health and quality of life of all Canadians, especially children, the elderly and

those with respiratory and cardiac conditions. Smog also causes tens of thousands of hospital and medical visits and more than 5,000 deaths annually. In Ontario alone, the Ontario Medical Association estimates that it costs taxpayers more than \$1 billion a year for hospital admissions, emergency room visits and absenteeism due to air pollution.

Smog is caused mainly by the combustion of fossil fuels in vehicles, homes, and industrial facilities such as coal-fired power plants and smelters. Although there has been much progress in cleaning our air, this is offset to some extent by the increase in air pollution sources.

Another air quality issue is the release of greenhouse gases (GHG), and the effect on climate change. This is considered one of the most significant environmental problems in the world. In response, 160 countries have signed the Kyoto Protocol, which has set targets for reducing GHG emissions. Canada is a signatory to this agreement, but has yet to ratify it. Nonetheless, Canada is committed to reducing GHG emissions.

### The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:

39. Ensure that any infrastructure program includes the opportunity to focus efforts on municipal water infrastructure by providing:
  - Traditional tripartite contributions for communities which do not have the revenue-generating capacity to support full-cost pricing; and
  - Revolving funds offering low- and no-interest loans for larger urban communities that can, over time, move to full-cost pricing.
40. Continue to consult with all orders of government and encourage existing federal guidelines to be used as a standard for drinking water quality.
41. Support the redevelopment and cleaning of ports and harbours.

Reducing air pollution levels in urban areas is the responsibility of every Canadian and every order of government. By reducing energy use, and considering viable alternatives, we can reduce emissions from power plants. Making our buildings more efficient and cutting down on the use of vehicles will also go a long way to resolving the problem. The amount of energy used to heat and cool buildings is responsible for about 30% of Canada's total greenhouse emissions. Transportation accounts for another 30%. Everyone contributes to the problem and therefore everyone should be part of the solution.

We must take measures to mitigate the negative environmental effects of transportation, which only get worse with growth. We must aim at reducing the need for motorized transportation, reducing consumption of non-renewable energy, and reducing emissions. These objectives can be achieved through improving public transit and fostering alternative transportation methods such as walking and cycling, setting higher vehicle emission standards, and encouraging the development of environmentally sensitive technologies and renewable energy sources.

Significant successes have been achieved in reducing urban greenhouse gases. Retrofitting municipal buildings for energy efficiency in Toronto is said to have reduced greenhouse gas emission by 67 per cent. By 2012, it is estimated that carbon dioxide emissions in Toronto will be reduced by 3 million tonnes per year – a major part of Toronto's emission reduction goal of 5.4 million tonnes

per year. Other urban centres embarking on similar programs include the City of Ottawa, the City of Winnipeg, and the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Across Canada, cities are finding ways to curb the use of fossil fuels in transportation. The City of Calgary, for example, has turned its C-Train into Canada's first wind-powered transportation system. The new system has reduced electricity use from coal-fired and natural gas-generated electricity by 21,000 megawatt-hours, enough to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 26,000 tonnes per year. This is significantly better than the original target of 10,800 tonnes per year. In addition, residents of Calgary will have an opportunity to use wind-generated clean power for their homes.

The Government of Canada has also shown initiative in the area of clean air by working with provincial, territorial and municipal governments to achieve their international obligations. This has included the **National Action Program on Climate Change (NAPCC)**, an agreement with the federal and provincial/territorial energy and environment ministers that sets the strategic course for Canada to achieve its goals, and FCM's *Partners for Climate Change* made up of 90 Canadian municipalities dedicated to help reducing GHG emissions within their own operations and their municipal borders.

The 2001 Budget increased funding for the FCM's **Green Municipal Enabling Fund** and the **Green Municipal Investment Fund** to provide funding for projects that increase

*"To realize the economic, social, health and environmental benefits of renewable energy development, the government must make renewable energy a major component of Canada's innovation agenda."*

*'Unlimited Potential: Capitalizing on Canada's Untapped Renewable Energy Resources.'*  
Liberal Caucus Working Group  
on Environmental Technologies, March 2002

*"At the same time, we are realizing that the quality of life and the vitality of our communities are directly related to the health of the natural environment."*

'Submission to the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues'  
Evergreen, January 2002

environmental efficiency and cost-effectiveness in such areas as public transportation facilities. The Government of Canada has also established special tax provisions for renewable energy projects and the **\$100 million Sustainable Development Technology Fund** to stimulate further development in new environmental technologies. Transport Canada is involved as well in reducing air pollution through transportation initiatives such as the **Moving on Sustainable Transportation (MOST)** initiative to invest **\$1 million over three years** on sustainable transportation projects, and the **five-year, \$35 million Urban Transportation Showcase Program**.

The Government must continue its leadership role in addressing air quality and build on current agreements.

It should promote the adoption of energy-efficient building design standards by retrofitting government buildings, bringing in tougher fuel efficiency targets for new cars, and promoting the use of alternative fuels. Creative tax incentives may also be used to promote the goal of energy efficiency and conservation.<sup>42-46</sup>

### **Healthy, Well-Planned Communities**

As urban populations grow, so does the need for more houses, apartments, schools, stores, offices, factories, parks, recreation facilities, and so on. All of these buildings and services need land, and it is important to examine how we develop and make use of that land.

Canadian cities have a serious problem with suburban sprawl – the

**The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

42. Consider creating A National Building Retrofit Strategy to encourage and facilitate energy efficiency. This could involve:
  - Providing tax credits to homeowners and businesses that undertake energy efficiency retrofits; and
  - Supporting a national community-based home retrofit advisory service network.
43. Set higher fuel economy standards for new vehicles and support innovation, research and development leading to more sustainable urban transportation systems.
44. Encourage Government of Canada employees to reduce vehicle use by locating government buildings and services along existing public transit service and make bus pass purchases easy through programs like ECOPASS.
45. Support the development of new renewable fuel and GHG reduction technologies.
46. Support minimum efficiency standards for new power generation facilities.

uncontrolled development of wilderness and agricultural land surrounding cities for homes and businesses. In addition to the loss of green space and agricultural land, sprawling communities require new infrastructure and services, which creates a burden for municipal governments.

It is important that the design of our communities be environmentally sensitive and utilize the land appropriately. In other words, Canadian cities should be guided by concepts of smart growth, sound urban design and an integrated, ecosystem approach.

In the 21st century, smart growth or sound urban design involves compact mixed-use development. This can bring activity, vibrancy, and a measure of sustainability to urban life, and can make urban areas attractive places to live for a wide range of people. This in turn will reduce development pressures on the urban fringe and rural areas. Good design can create an urban environment with attractive public spaces and amenities for residents and workers; provide a wide range of housing, shopping and employment opportunities; permit greater efficiency in municipal infrastructure, transportation systems, and the delivery of municipal services; and improve mobility for all segments of the population. It can also reduce pollution by reducing reliance on vehicles. Good urban design must also take into account the impact development has on interdependent physical, social, economic and natural systems.

In existing neighbourhoods, smart growth development should focus on

maintaining and improving the existing urban fabric, providing incremental improvements, and reusing existing infrastructure; including preserving heritage buildings, redeveloping brownfields and encouraging green roof initiatives.

In new urban areas, the goal should be to achieve compact form and higher densities while preserving open spaces and privacy for residents. Smart growth in suburban neighbourhoods also encourages mixed-use development that promotes efficient transportation, as well emphasizing the preservation and integration of environmentally sensitive areas and valuable urban agricultural land.

Land use and urban design are essentially provincial and municipal matters, but the Government of Canada has recognized them as environmental issues as well. Inefficient land use and poor urban design lead to unsustainable infrastructure and transportation, poor air quality and loss of natural space.

Environment Canada is leading by example in urban design and conservation through its **Ecosystems Initiatives** which are illustrations of working models of an integrated ecosystem-based approach. Projects such as the St. Lawrence Action Plan and the Fraser Basin Action Plan are assessed and based on the premise of connecting ecosystems with economic and social goals.

The Government of Canada must work in partnership with provincial and municipal governments, as well as the development industry and community organizations, to develop

*A Core Redevelopment Policy is needed to encourage people to live downtown, create incentives to build on brownfield sites and preserve heritage buildings. This will ensure economic development in urban cores.*

Halifax Roundtable  
November 9, 2001

*"The development of brownfields is important to cities to the extent that it results in more compact and efficient urban growth. Compact growth provides a competitive advantage to cities because it reduces the cost of infrastructure and increases urban livability. The development of brownfield sites is also important to municipalities because it could increase economic activity and property tax revenues."*

'Options for Fiscal Tools in Support of Urban Sustainability' NRTEE October 25, 2001

guidelines for municipalities on key issues that affect environmental health and quality of life. This involves the sharing of best practices in smart growth and urban design. The preservation of urban green space is also a critical issue, and by working with community partners such as land trusts and conservation organizations, all orders of government will ensure strategic green spaces are protected for the benefit of the community.<sup>47-49</sup>

### Brownfields and Contaminated Sites

Urban regions across Canada contain large areas of land that have been abandoned because of suspected or actual soil contamination. These lands, known as brownfields, are often in the downtown core, where existing municipal services are readily available, or along transportation corridors. These sites pose a potential risk to public health and groundwater quality if the land is in fact contaminated.

However, brownfields also present tremendous opportunities. They can

provide space for much needed affordable housing, green areas and economic development. Simply cleaning up these sites is worthwhile in terms of reducing the risk to public health, removing blights on a community's image and guarding against urban decay. The appropriate tax incentives can help achieve the objectives.

Canada has an estimated 3000 brownfield sites. The value of these lands is immense. They could produce much needed property tax revenues at a lower cost, generate economic development in core areas, and increase the cosmetic appeal of a community. In addition, redeveloping brownfields in existing communities and city centres reduces suburban sprawl by encouraging infill development and the use of existing infrastructure.

However, there are three major impediments to brownfield redevelopment that must be addressed: uncertain and unfair liability regimes; lack of capital to finance brownfield redevelopment; and lack of awareness about the importance of reinvesting in brownfields, and the economic and

#### The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:

47. Encourage innovation in ecological design by creating incentives for the private sector and municipalities to incorporate ecologically sound and smart growth principles, and to acknowledge successful private-public partnerships on smart growth.
48. Adopt and showcase sound urban design practices by incorporating ecologically sustainable landscape practices on government lands, and incorporate smart growth principles by building and locating government services in urban cores and along transit corridors.
49. Support the acquisition of critical urban green space by assisting community partnerships such as land trusts and conservation organizations and provide incentives to allow land donations for conservation purposes.

environmental benefits of doing so [*"State of the Debate Report."* NRTEE, 2001].

The Task Force recommends that a clear, coordinated brownfield redevelopment approach should be developed, which includes an integrated risk assessment and liability management framework that will harmonize federal and provincial regulations, as well as coordinated incentives and procedures by federal departments. An excellent model that could be followed is the *Brownfield Redevelopment Initiative* by the United States federal government, which creates tax incentives to leverage private investment in contaminated properties in targeted areas needing revitalization.

The Government of Canada man-

dated the **National Round Table on the Economy and the Environment** to develop a **National Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy** to make Canada a global leader in remediation and in addition, the 2001 budget committed **\$50 million of the Green Municipal Enabling Fund to be earmarked for other solutions.**

Brownfields offer a great opportunity to check the advance of suburban sprawl and contribute to the economic development of existing communities. With the right tools and incentives from the Government of Canada and other orders of government, the redevelopment of contaminated lands will contribute to our cities' prosperity, beautify decaying neighbourhoods, and improve the urban environment.<sup>50-52</sup>

**The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada:**

50. Work with our partners in government to create an integrated risk assessment and liability management framework that harmonizes federal and provincial regulations.
51. Consider targeted mortgage insurance and appropriate tax incentives for brownfield redevelopment.
52. Continue to provide support for completion of brownfields inventories, risk assessments and community consultations.



# The Next Stage

The Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues began its consultations with Canadians in May 2001. This interim report is by no means the end of the dialogue. Rather, the recommendations and ideas are designed to be the focus for further debate that will culminate in the release of a follow-up report later this year.

This report reflects our conversations with Canadians across the country. We heard a lot about civic pride, economic success, human capital, social peace and effective partnerships. At the same time, municipal governments and individual citizens told us about the challenges they face as they struggle to seek solutions to critical issues. The Task Force was told that municipal governments are hampered by fiscal challenges and consequently are unable to keep pace

with ever-increasing demands for services, programs and infrastructure requirements.

We found that the quality of life for which Canada is renowned is being threatened by the very growth that is the hallmark of its success.

The Government of Canada has a unique opportunity to work with our urban partners on a new approach. Canada's Urban Strategy must reflect 21st century conditions with its accompanying economic, social, environmental and cultural challenges. It needs to ensure the high quality of life and economic competitiveness of our urban regions, and assure Canada's future prosperity.

The Task Force looks forward to continuing the dialogue on the ideas presented in this report. We welcome your comments on the findings and the recommendations.



# Edmonton, Alberta

August 23, 2001

The City of Edmonton is the second largest city in Alberta with a population of 657,509 [as of 2000] and a population of 938,000 in the census metropolitan area (CMA) [*Census 2001*]. It has the second highest number of Aboriginal people in a Canadian city with over 33,000 and has a high percentage of visible minorities (18.1%) relative to the rest of Canada (11.3%) [*1996 Census*].

Edmonton and Calgary together account for 64% of Alberta's GDP. In the spring of 2001, the City of Edmonton was first in real economic growth among Canadian cities with 4.8% growth in GDP. The forecast is for Edmonton to experience a GDP growth of 3.5% per year in the future (2001-2005) [*Conference Board of Canada*].

Edmonton has a highly diversified economy. It has benefited greatly from investment in the northern Alberta oil and tar sands, but it also relies on other industries such as: advanced manufacturing; agri-food and forest products; biomedicine and biotechnology; engineering and technical ser-

vices; information and media services; oil, gas and chemicals production; tourism and entertainment; and transportation and logistics.

Edmonton has a strong foundation in post-secondary institutions that produce important research and development, and foster innovation in the Canadian economy. For example, the University of Alberta will receive \$120 million over the next five years from the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta for the creation of the National Institute for Nanotechnology. Nanotechnology is a cutting-edge science that will bring benefits in a wide range of areas from health care to computer technologies [*Edmonton Socio-economic Outlook, 2001-2006*]. The University is also internationally known for its research in engineering and cellular and environmental biology. Two federal Networks of Centres of Excellence also have their national scientific and administrative headquarters at the University: the Protein Engineering Network and the Sustainable Forest Management Network.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

- Reinforce the Government of Canada's leadership role in improving the quality of life in urban centres as well as maintaining a competitive economy. The government needs to actively respond to the issues facing Canadian cities.
- Recognize the importance of cities to the national economy and promote their 'showcase' value globally.
- Encourage partnerships between the three levels of government, the private sector and national/community organizations. This is the key to finding creative solutions. Principles to follow should include:
  - Municipal drive;
  - Long-term solutions and sustained funding;
  - Federal resources used in federal decisions;
  - Accountability;
  - Helping those in greatest need;
  - Fiscal choices; and
  - Partnership.
- Provide more financial assistance to meet the infrastructure deficit that municipalities are facing.
- Expand light rail transit in Edmonton and build interchanges on the Yellowhead Trail within the city, as these are critical to meeting the city's transportation needs.
- Increase support for arts and culture and encourage partnerships in this area to ensure its continued success and contribution to urban quality of life
- Increase support for programs for children at risk and temporary homeless shelters, as well as greater access to affordable housing. This will help reduce poverty levels in Edmonton where 26% of citizens had an income below the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Off (CLIO) level.
- Explore and develop the uses of the Internet for communicating knowledge and providing services to citizens.
- Provide more support for research and development on environment and sustainable development issues such as climate control and sustainable communities.
- Assist provinces, urban areas and community groups in training and attracting a skilled work force as a way to reduce labour shortages facing major Canadian cities.

## PARTICIPANTS

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# Toronto, Ontario

October 9-10, 2001

The City of Toronto (population 2.5 million) and the surrounding Greater Toronto Area is the largest urban region in Canada, with a total population of 5.1 million, which is expected to rise to 7 million by the year 2021. It is the 5th largest municipal government in North America. One third of Canada's population is located within a 160 km radius of Toronto. Almost 100,000 people migrate to Toronto every year. It is the key destination for immigrants and refugees and receives 42% of all immigrants to Canada. It is known as one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world.

It is estimated that the GDP generated in Toronto is greater than that of 8 of 10 Canadian provinces. Toronto will lead the country with an annual real growth of 3.7% in the next five years. Toronto generates 44% of Ontario's GDP, making it one of the wealthiest cities in the country and making Ontario the major economic engine in the country [*The Conference Board of Canada*].

With a highly educated (over 50% have university or college degrees), multi-lingual, multi-cultural labour force, Toronto is the nation's largest employment centre with one-sixth of Canada's jobs – employing 1.2 million workers. Toronto has a diverse econo-

my and is home to 40% of the Canadian companies on Fortune's Global 500 list.

The local economy is home to a number of competitive industry clusters, including: aerospace; apparel; automotive; biomedical; financial services; film and television; IT&T; and tourism. In addition, Toronto is home to 90% of Canada's foreign banks, top accounting and mutual fund companies and is a leading financial centre. Toronto's Pearson Airport is the country's largest and busiest airport serving more than 28 million passengers during the year 2000.

There are several universities and colleges in the GTA region. The most outstanding are the University of Toronto, York University, and Ryerson University. These 3 institutions make major contributions to national and international innovations in health sciences, medical research, film and television, performing arts, journalism and teaching. The University of Toronto is Canada's number one research institute and has a worldwide reputation for medical advances. Both York University and the University of Toronto were recently named Research Chairs; Toronto received \$21 million in a variety of disciplines, and York \$1.4 m in political science.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

- Reinforce the leadership role of the Government of Canada in improving the quality of life and economic competitiveness of urban centres. A proactive approach must be taken to respond to urban issues or concerns.
- Recognize that the economic and social success of Canada depends on strong and healthy cities and that Toronto can contribute to that success.
- Consult, collaborate and coordinate with cities before announcing and implementing federal programs and services that may have an impact on urban centres.
- Develop a vision for the urban regions through a National Urban Strategy that:
  - Creates standards;
  - Establishes policy criteria;
  - Plans strategic investments;
  - Analyses impacts on urban regions;
  - Coordinates federal programs and spending; and
  - Considers the impact on cities of international agreements (e.g. Kyoto, NAFTA, WTO).
- Provide long-term, sustainable funding for infrastructure. Most of the infrastructure in the City is over 30 years old, and some is even 50 years old.
- Address Toronto's serious transit problems. Congestion and gridlock on roads affect quality of life, the environment and economic competitiveness. Seventy per cent of GTA freeways, including the Highway 401 (a major transportation route to the United States), are at total capacity during peak hours. This costs commercial vehicles \$2 billion per year. Toll Highway 407 has not solved congestion problems occurring on Highway 401. It is important that the inter-regional transit system receive more support to help relieve this traffic.
- Assist local transit through:
  - Tax exempt employer subsidized transit passes;
  - Dedicating the equivalent of 3 cents per litre of fuel taxes for transportation;
  - Locating federal businesses in 'transit-friendly' areas; and
  - Eliminating excise taxes and GST on fuels in municipal transit systems.

- Expand GO Transit, which is at full capacity. Federal government should place priorities on and invest in light rail transit and VIA Rail in the east-west corridor.
- Provide more support for programs for children at risk, temporary homeless shelters, and greater access to affordable housing. Low vacancy rates and high rents have put pressure on seniors and immigrants who need to find affordable rental housing. Sixty thousand families are waiting for housing and 2,000 families are in temporary shelter. There is a need for more flexible programs like SCPI, changes to CMHC mortgage insurance criteria, and a review of federal initiatives to stimulate housing for people on low to medium incomes.
- Find a way to ensure the federal housing agreement with the Province of Ontario will increase the stock of affordable rental housing.
- Develop a National Housing Program
- Provide long-term, sustainable funding for immigration and refugee resettlement and employment programs. Toronto receives 42% of all immigrants to Canada and the Government of Canada should reimburse the City for its local service costs.
- Assist provinces, urban areas and community groups in training and attracting a skilled work force as a way to reduce labour shortages facing major Canadian cities.
- Continue to direct funding to the urban regions through initiatives such as Centres of Excellence and the National Homelessness Initiative.
- Endorse the City's financial services sector's efforts to have Toronto designated as a "Financial Centre for Canada".
- Increase support for and encourage partnerships in arts and culture. Many major national schools for the arts are located in Toronto, such as the National Theatre School and the National Ballet School.

## PARTICIPANTS

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# Winnipeg, Manitoba

October 11-12, 2001

The City of Winnipeg has a population of 629,800 and makes up 93% of the population of the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), which has a population of 682,200 [2000]. Winnipeg has the largest Aboriginal population of any Canadian city at 45,740 and the same proportion of immigrants and visible minorities as the rest of Canada [according to the 1996 Census].

The economy of Winnipeg accounts for more than half (67%) of Manitoba's GDP. It is expected to experience an average 3% real GDP growth over the next five years [Conference Board of Canada], which is lower than other large Canadian cities.

Winnipeg's economic growth will primarily be driven by the manufacturing sector, transportation, communications, finance, insurance and real estate sectors. In 2001, manufacturing shipments in Manitoba increased by 5% (or a total of \$5.9 billion), which is 7% higher than the national average. It also benefits from several other industries including: aerospace;

agribusiness; apparel; environmental industries; film production; financial services; health and biotechnology; information technology; and transportation equipment manufacturing. In addition, Winnipeg is the home to the Canadian Mint and is the national grain exchange centre for the rest of Canada.

Winnipeg is home to a number of post-secondary institutions. These institutions produce many innovative ideas and research that benefit the Canadian economy as well as the local community. For example, the University of Manitoba created the Manitoba First Nations Centre for Aboriginal Health Research in 2001. It is a joint project with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Health Services Centre and the University, and is partially funded by the Canada Foundation for Innovation. The University is also well known for its research in health and medicine (e.g. spinal cord, HIV/AIDS), farming technology and practices, and wireless communication.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

- Develop a long-term, flexible and focused vision for urban areas. This should include greater communication with governments and the public about the government's current investment and role in urban centres.
- Focus on issues that are national, cross-scale, and cross-jurisdiction. Promote bilateral and trilateral agreements, collaborating with cities and provinces to achieve national and local goals. (The Winnipeg Agreement is a good example.)
- Support the expansion of trade and exports by designating important highways and roads as "in the national interest." This is very important to Winnipeg, which is an international centre for trade and the hub of the Mid-West Trade Corridor (a north-south trade route).
- Invest in local economies, by investing in innovation and research at universities (by assisting in implementing ideas and covering costs of research) and creating economic clusters (by offering tax incentives to business and industry).
- Increase funding for infrastructure (transit, roads, water and sewage). This would help defray the \$64 million costs for infrastructure maintenance that Winnipeg faces each year.
- Develop a national strategy for urban Aboriginal people. Such a strategy should include: direct funding to urban Aboriginal people; rooming houses and affordable family housing to combat homelessness and poverty; training and employment; health initiatives; a focus on youth initiatives, including financial support to improve access to post-secondary education; and community programs to fight crime and prostitution.
- Create a centre for reserve Aboriginals moving into urban areas. This could be done through the expansion of the federal Urban Aboriginal Strategy that is coordinated by Privy Council Office.
- Work with cities to develop growth strategies that include attracting immigrants and skilled labour. This would benefit Winnipeg greatly, as the city receives less than its share of immigrants and is expected to experience a decline in population in the near future.
- Promote immigration of francophones to all Canadian cities, and especially to Winnipeg.
- Get directly involved and offer support in emergencies. For example: the federal government should invest in the Red River Flood Control project.

## PARTICIPANTS

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# Ottawa-Gatineau, Ontario / Quebec

October 21, 2001 and March 18, 2002

The National Capital Region, comprising the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, is a unique urban area spanning two provinces. The federal government is both major landowner and employer in the Region. This factor has a significant social and economic impact.

Geographically, the City of Ottawa is 90% rural with a population that is 90% urban. It covers four times as much area as the City of Toronto, stretching 85 kilometres from east to west, and 75 kilometres from north to south. Ottawa-Gatineau is the third largest francophone community in North America with approximately 34% of its citizens speaking French as their mother tongue. The bilingual aspect of the population is important to the cultural and linguistic fabric of the region. Thirty-seven per cent of residents consider themselves bilingual, compared to 11.6% of Ontario residents and 17% of people in Canada as a whole. It is the fourth largest city in Canada and has seen tremendous growth over the past few years. The current population of the National Capital Region is 1,064,000 [Census 2001].

The GDP generated in Ottawa is estimated at 11.1% for the year 2000,

mainly because of growth in the telecom manufacturing industry. In the 1999-2000 period, GDP rose by 13.4% overall. [*The Conference Board of Canada*].

The two main employers in the region are the federal government and the high tech sector. In 2001, the federal government accounted for almost 80,000 jobs (Ottawa) and high technology approx. 70,000 (Ottawa). The agricultural economy generates 10,000 jobs (Ottawa) and is the largest farm economy of any Canadian city. Because it is the capital city of Canada, with many national museums, art galleries, historic sites and heritage buildings located in the region, tourism is a major generator of jobs and dollars.

The most outstanding post-secondary institutions are the University of Ottawa, Carleton University, and the Université du Québec à Hull. The University of Ottawa is Canada's only fully bilingual university and is home to the world-renowned Ottawa Heart Institute. Carleton University is ranked first in Canada in international research collaboration and its School of Journalism has produced a number of well-known journalists.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

- Develop an urban vision that includes:
  - The reinstatement of a Minister of Urban Affairs with a Cabinet Committee;
  - Strategic funding;
  - Regional ministry offices in major urban centres;
  - On-going consultations with the municipalities;
  - Social and economic cohesion programs;
  - Federal leadership;
  - Shared sense of nation building and community; and
  - Reliable revenue sources.
- Facilitate a joint National Capital Region Plan – with Ottawa, Gatineau, and the National Capital Commission (NCC). There is a need for coordination on issues such as health care, transit, movement of goods, labour and housing.
- Consider creating a National Capital District or Authority (such as Washington, DC) with no new bureaucracy but with common objectives for all communities in the region. The federal government would promote joint projects.
- Lift restrictions on the ability of the municipalities to raise money and consider new revenue sources such as local sales tax or hotel/room tax, ability to engage in public-private partnerships, ability to offer tax incentives to attract businesses, and ability to reduce capital gains on donations to Community Foundations.
- Attract foreign businesses by streamlining the role of financial commissioners and have one National Securities Commission like the European Union.
- Provide long term sustainable funding for infrastructure. Ottawa needs a convention centre, and the NCR needs an inter-regional transit connection with two new bridges and extended light rail. This is the number one issue for Ottawa Gatineau.
- Consider extending federal-municipal partnerships, such as the Homelessness Initiative, to include affordable housing. The Government of Canada should consider:
  - Using federal lands for affordable housing;

- Providing more long term funding for land acquisition and infrastructure; and
- Improving coordination between Ottawa and Gatineau so that Ottawa families can get access to affordable housing in Quebec.

This would benefit Ottawa, which has an apartment vacancy rate of 0.2% and has over 15,000 families waiting for housing.

- Increase federal support for transit by transferring a portion of fuel tax to municipalities and eliminating GST on municipal transit purchases. OC Transpo needs \$500 million over the next five years to replace its ageing fleet. Also, consider creating incentives for fuel-efficient vehicles, and duplicating ticket arrangement between GO Transit and VIA Rail as in other urban centres.
- Expand the mandate of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy by investing in housing for Aboriginal people, creating economic opportunities for

aboriginal businesses, and developing a specific Aboriginal health strategy. As well, Aboriginals from Quebec living in Ottawa need access to health care

- Increase long-term support for settlement programs for immigrants (i.e. language, training, education and housing), review immigration policies to include municipal government input, and coordinate the work of local agencies and volunteers.
- Provide real information on skill certification and equivalencies to potential immigrants. Ensure immigration policy focuses on socio-economic needs of urban centres and accelerate the immigration process for skilled workers where demand is high.
- Spend more on multiculturalism and anti-racism programs. As well, strengthen the role and mandate of multicultural liaison officers.

## PARTICIPANTS

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# Halifax, Nova Scotia

November 9, 2001

The Halifax Regional Municipality is the largest urban centre in the Atlantic Provinces. Made up of the four former municipalities of Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and Halifax County, the Halifax Regional Municipality has a population of 359,000 [2001 Census]. Halifax is a major port: its historic Pier 21 was once the main point of entry for immigrants to Canada. Today, it still receives about 0.4% of all recent immigrants, who make up about seven per cent of its population.

The Halifax region accounts for 47% of Nova Scotia's GDP. Forecasters say Halifax will experience an increase of 3.0% in real economic growth annually over the next five years [*Conference Board of Canada*]. This growth will be due in large part to a number of key industries and a diversification of the local economy.

Halifax is considered the financial centre of Atlantic Canada with substantial growth in its financial, insurance and real estate sectors in recent years. Traditional reliance on the natural resources – both land and sea – and tourism are giving way to developments in the near future in oil and gas; information and communications technology; cultural industries of film and television, music and the arts; advanced manufacturing;

education and knowledge services; as well as life sciences.

In addition, the Regional Municipality of Halifax has an important transportation sector. The Port of Halifax is one of the world's leading ports. Approximately 14 million metric tonnes of cargo passed through Halifax in 2000, as well as 94 cruise ships. Halifax International Airport is the hub for air transport in Atlantic Canada with nearly three million passengers a year. Lastly, Halifax is home to the eastern centre for the Canadian National Railway's domestic and international distribution network.

Halifax's largest employer is the Department of National Defence (DND), which operates the Shearwater Air Force Base and Maritime Forces Atlantic base. These employ about 11,000 Canadian Forces members and civilian DND employees.

The Halifax region also has an important research and development sector with several research institutions and two major universities – Dalhousie and St. Mary's. Research focuses on product development, aerospace, biotechnology, environment, agriculture, manufacturing, software development, and health sciences. Halifax is home to the National Research Council's Institute for Marine Biosciences and the Life Sciences Development Association.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

- Develop a federal urban policy. Such a policy would involve:
  - Providing leadership and vision, but letting local communities determine the priorities;
  - Coordinating government programs and services to avoid duplication;
  - Creating more flexible programs/funding to allow for long-term planning; and
  - Ensuring that this policy meets the needs of all our urban centres and not just the big cities.
- Offer support for harbour cleanup and other harbour solutions by providing funding and working with provincial and local governments. Redevelopment of the harbour has the potential to generate \$80 million in federal and provincial taxes.
- Develop a separate infrastructure program to fund transit expansion and upgrades, and encourage better, integrated modes of transit (i.e. rail, roads, ports, airports, etc.).
- Create a Core Redevelopment Policy to encourage people to live downtown, to encourage developers to build on brownfield sites and renovate/preserve heritage buildings, and to encourage core economic development. The policy should include measures to protect people (i.e. working poor and homeless) who may be hurt by increased costs in the core neighbourhoods.
- Develop a Fair Housing Act to promote more affordable housing for seniors, the working poor and the disabled.
- Create a “Made in Atlantic Canada Fund” to lever offshore gas dollars to use for transit, harbour cleanup, and the economic development of the region.
- Increase funding for sewer and water infrastructure. As well, the Government of Canada should develop national water standards to address concerns about water supply protection.
- Consult local communities and governments about the disposal and development of federal lands. Action on surplus lands should take into account local priorities such as affordable housing or preservation of heritage sites.
- Encourage more immigration to the Atlantic region and offer improved resettlement services. Immigration brings new ideas and energy, and helps drive the local economy.
- Increase funding to youth programs and create training and development programs.
- Encourage research and development on urban issues by increasing financial support to universities and research institutes.
- Support Community Foundations and amend funding criteria to allow economic community redevelopment

## PARTICIPANTS

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# Montreal, Quebec

November 12-13, 2001

The City of Montreal is the second largest urban centre in Canada. With a population of 1,775,846 in the 1996 Census, it makes up 53% of the census metropolitan area (CMA). The population of the CMA, which includes Montreal's many suburbs, is 3,427,000 [Census 2001]. Montreal is the second largest francophone city in the world with 53 per cent of its citizens having French as their first language. It attracts 12% of all immigrants to Canada, and they make up 26.5 per cent of its population.

Montreal's economy accounts for 49% of Quebec's total GDP. Its forecasted economic growth is 3.3 per cent per annum, on average, over the next five years (*Conference Board of Canada*). An important factor in Montreal's economy is its highly educated work force: 26.8% of those 15 years old or over are university graduates – the highest rate for a Canadian urban centre.

The success of Montreal's economy is also due to its diversity. Key industry clusters include: clothing, textiles, and furniture manufacturing; automobiles, advanced technologies; telecommunications; biotechnology and genomics; pharmaceuticals; aeronautics and aerospace technology; chemicals; financial services; film and television; tourism; and retail. One of Montreal's largest employers is Bombardier, an aviation manufacturer, which employs more than 12,000 people.

Montreal is also one of two recognized International Financial Centres in Canada. It has one of the largest international airports in the country, serving over nine million passengers every year. As well, it has a large international port that handles over 20 million metric tonnes annually.

The City of Montreal has a unique relationship with its provincial government. In 1999, the City of Montreal signed a framework agreement with the Government of Quebec concerning the development of urban centres. The agreement gives the city more fiscal powers and additional revenue sources for public transit (through a provincial vehicle registration fee) and settlement services for new immigrants.

In addition, Montreal is home to several universities, including McGill University, Concordia University, the Université de Montréal and the Université du Québec à Montréal. These post-secondary institutions offer important services to the community and economy, especially through research, development and innovation. McGill University, for example, is an intensive research institution and is affiliated with more than 75 research centres and Centres of Excellence Networks. McGill is active in such research areas as aerospace medicine, genomics, telecommunications, robotics and intelligent systems, pulp and paper research, nutrition, and neuroscience.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

- There is a need for an integrated urban strategy that:
  - Develops better synergy between governments;
  - Involves an active approach to urban issues;
  - Focuses on local solutions to local problems;
  - Involves ongoing monitoring of federal government policies;
  - Ensures strategic planning for metropolitan areas; and
  - Encourages tripartite agreements and partnerships with governments, the private sector, the voluntary sector, and community groups.
- Create a Ministry of Urban Affairs that represents the will of government, and pushes the urban agenda.
- Develop a new relationship with the newly amalgamated City of Montreal.
- Invest in urban transportation to relieve congestion and gridlock on major highways and roads in Montreal. This should include:
  - Subsidizing public transit services;
  - Investing in train links between the airports and downtown;
  - Improving Route 30 as a way for trucks and through traffic to bypass Montreal.
  - Redeveloping the Port of Montreal.

Investment in urban transit and infrastructure will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve economic competitiveness.

- Create a National Transportation Strategy by amending the current Infrastructure Program to include a transit component or by creating a Canadian version of the US *Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21)*.
- Work with VIA Rail to improve cooperation with intra-urban transit (i.e. along the lines of GO Transit and AMT), to coordinate use of CN and CP Rail lines, and to improve passenger rail service in the Windsor-Quebec corridor.
- Encourage partnership to leverage private investment in programs such as Infrastructure. In Montreal, private-public partnerships could help complete construction on Highways 25 and 40.

- Establish an Affordable Housing Strategy, with a large CHMC role in affordable housing, incentives for rental housing, extension of SCPI funding for homelessness, and increased emphasis on social housing.
- Protect international trade links and border trade. Cross-border trade is important to Montreal's economic development.
- Invest in immigration as a source of new manpower and new ideas. Ensure immigration is not hurt by enhanced security.
- Encourage and fund the development of Intercultural or Multicultural communities to improve quality of life.
- Enhance policies that reduce risky behaviour (i.e. prostitution, drug use, gambling etc....) by investing in vulnerable groups and marginalized communities. Assistance should be focused on Aboriginal people, the handicapped, the homeless, youth, and single-parent families.
- Encourage brownfield redevelopment in the urban core. In Montreal, it is estimated that there are 30-40 million square feet of contaminated land.
- Increase long-term funding for infrastructure repair and water treatment. National water standards should also be considered. In Montreal, 40% of water processed is lost due to leaking pipelines.
- Review waste management and disposal regulations, and encourage the conversion of non-hazardous waste for energy production.

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# Vancouver, British Columbia

November 15-16, 2001

The third largest urban region in Canada, the City of Vancouver has a population of 571,708 and a population of 1,980,000 in the census metropolitan area (CMA) [2001 statistics]. Greater Vancouver is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in Canada, mainly because of international immigration. Eighty-seven per cent (87.2%) of the area's population growth is due to immigration, with a large majority of immigrants coming from Southeast Asia. [287,675 immigrants settled in Greater Vancouver between 1993 and 2000, of which 80.7% came from Asia]. Because of the large number of immigrants to the area, over 90 distinct languages are spoken in this urban centre.

Vancouver's attraction to immigrants has made it one of the most culturally diverse cities in North America. In addition, Vancouver has a population of more than 31,000 Aboriginal people.

Economically, the Vancouver region accounts for 53% of British Columbia's GDP, according to the Conference Board of Canada.

Traditionally a resource-based economy, Greater Vancouver is experiencing growth in other industry and business sectors including: banking and financial services; tourism; high technology; film and television; transportation; communications; call centres; biotechnology; aerospace; and retail.

In addition, Vancouver is one of two designated International Financial

Centres in Canada and is the third largest film and television production centre in North America. Vancouver is also home to Canada's largest port (where 76.6 million tonnes were shipped in 2000) and Vancouver International Airport is Canada's second busiest (with 16 million passengers in 2000.)

The City of Vancouver has special recognition from the provincial government of British Columbia. Under the Vancouver Charter, the City of Vancouver enjoys special legislative status including the ability to participate in public/private partnerships and legislative controls over zoning and development. The City of Vancouver is also a member of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). The GVRD is a unique form of regional government: a partnership of 21 municipalities and one electoral area working together to provide essential services throughout the region.

Greater Vancouver is home to two major universities: the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. These institutions are major generators of new ideas and technologies. For example, the University of British Columbia established the Clean Energy Research Centre in 2001. As well, the university generated 13 new spin-off companies and filed 183 patents on new technologies last year.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

- Create forums for cooperation and discussion between municipal and provincial governments, and non-profit organizations to address specific, local issues. A successful model to follow is the Vancouver Agreement on the redevelopment of Vancouver's Lower Eastside.
- Encourage permanent regional councils as forums to consult municipal and provincial governments on federal policy decisions
- Develop a national vision for urban Aboriginal people, which includes funding and resources for programs such as pre-employment and life skills training, affordable housing, youth initiatives and health programs. The protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage and support for urban Friendship Centres should be included.
- Address congestion and gridlock by creating a long-term plan for infrastructure and transit. Funding needs to be farsighted, active and strategic. The strategy must also recognize the importance of gateway cities, like Vancouver, for their role in transporting goods by creating a National Roads program.
- Create a long-term National Housing Program. This should include funding for social housing and homeless shelters, and tax incentives for the private sector to build more rental and affordable housing.
- Offer support to help solve problems related to the leaky condos crisis. This could include a no-interest loan program for condo repairs, a CMHC leaky condo program, or a GST rebate on condo repair materials.
- Provide leadership and support for regional sustainability plans, which include initiatives for green space, transit, infill development, energy efficiency, and brownfield reclamation.
- Recognize the roles of cities as centres for integration and settlement for immigrants and refugees by allocating funding for resettlement programs, skills training and ESL education. Access to HRDC programs should also be available to immigrants.
- Develop national standards or guidelines that recognize foreign credentials and work experience to help integrate immigrants into the work force and alleviate labour shortages.
- Provide support for community models of arts and cultural development programs and more long-term funding for this sector.
- Create a National Childcare Strategy that supports families and funds childcare, preschool and prenatal care.
- Become the leader in prevention, education and treatment of drug and alcohol use, especially among young people.
- Implement Canada-wide system to deal with the sexual exploitation of youth. This is a particular concern among the Aboriginal population in Vancouver.

## PARTICIPANTS

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# Calgary, Alberta

February 1, 2002

The City of Calgary is the largest city in Alberta with a population of 876,519 (2001). It makes up 91% of the census metropolitan area (CMA) with a population of 965,262 (1999). Calgary is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada and is considered the third most culturally diverse. This is due to its high proportion of visible minorities and immigrants, which make up 20.8% of the CMA's population. It is also home to over 15,000 urban Aboriginal people, a number that is expected to increase.

The City of Calgary and the City of Edmonton account for 64% of Alberta's GDP [Conference Board of Canada]. It is expected to experience an annual real GDP growth of 3.2% over the next five years.

Calgary's economy has traditionally been dominated by oil and gas, but over the years it has become very diversified. Key sectors include: information technology; biotechnology; transportation and logistics; geomatics; telecommunications; tourism and the arts; business services; construction; financial services; manufacturing; and retail. In addition, the economy benefits because Calgary has the highest percentage among Canadian cities of people with a post-secondary education (60%). It also has the highest concentration of engineers

and scientists in the country (44 out of every 1000 people in the work force.) It also ranks second in Canada, after Toronto, for the number of head offices located there.

Calgary Regional Partnership, composed of 12 jurisdictions, is the first regional partnership in Alberta to be funded by government. It works cooperatively on issues like watershed mapping, emergency services and economic development. The City of Calgary has also formed a formal partnership with the City of Edmonton to work cooperatively on advocacy and economic issues in a way that will benefit both cities.

Post-secondary educational institutions in Calgary include community colleges, technical schools and a major university. The University of Calgary has what is considered Canada's largest university-affiliated research park. It is a member of 17 Networks of Centres of Excellence, and it has the third greatest rate of research commercialization in the country with 135 technology disclosures and 43 patent applications filed in 2000-2001. In addition, the University plans to open two new research centres: the Health Research Innovation Centre and the Calgary Centre for Innovation Technology.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

- Develop a National Urban Strategy that strengthens partnership with municipalities, is cooperative, and includes an access point for municipal governments to consult with the Government of Canada. It should also recognize the importance of cities to economic and social development – “Strong cities build a strong nation.”
- Help relieve pressures on municipal infrastructure by amending the tax code to permit depreciation for municipal infrastructure purchases (e.g. buses, light rail transit, heavy equipment) and removing fuel tax on urban transit.
- Increase long-term funding to transportation infrastructure projects to relieve traffic congestion and improve the transportation of goods and passengers. The two most important projects in Calgary are expanding transit service and constructing a ring road.
- Develop an Affordable Housing and National Housing Strategy with the provinces. This could include a flexible grant program to lower the financing cost of new and rehabilitated housing, permitting depreciation costs for heritage buildings, and developing strategies to attract skilled labour through immigration and apprenticeship programs.
- Increase shelter and rental assistance in major cities to combat homelessness and poverty. In Calgary, 1200 people stay in temporary shelter each night, and over 11,000 people every year spend at least one night in a shelter.
- Work with provinces, universities and accrediting bodies to develop standards and guidelines to recognize foreign credentials and work experience of immigrants.
- Increase direct funding for urban Aboriginal people through municipal resettlement programs, skills training, shelter and housing, primary and secondary Aboriginal school programs, and increased Canada Health and Social Transfers.
- Support and offer funding for urban Aboriginal youth programs in post-secondary schooling, employment, health, and community development.
- Offer leadership to the arts and culture community by encouraging dialogue and the sharing of best practices in the promotion and funding of this sector.
- Build on the Canada Volunteer Initiative, which recognizes the importance of citizenship and volunteerism in the building of communities and human capital.
- Revise tax laws so that donations to community foundations and non-profit organizations would not be considered taxable gains. This would create an incentive for more, and larger, private donations.
- Develop a Government of Canada smart growth program to encourage and fund sustainable regional solutions to development, economic, and environmental issues that cross municipal boundaries.

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